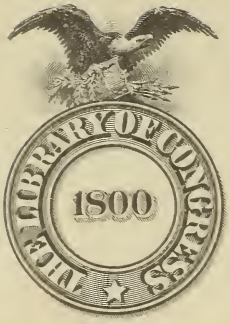
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CHRISTIANITY

AND

MODERN INFIDELITY.

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AND

MODERN INFIDELITY,

THEIR

RELATIVE INTELLECTUAL CLAIMS

COMPARED.

BY THE

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1871

WITH AN INDEX,

PREPARED FOR THE AMERICAN EDITION.

NEW YORK:

DANIEL DANA, JR., 381 BROADWAY.

1859.

Dominus illuminatio mea Lux Lucis
District Newfoundland Oct. 21, 1857

BT1210
.M65

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1859,

By DANIEL DANA, Jr.,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of New York.

PREFACE.

The following work contains the substance of certain conversations between a person of property and position professing Infidel principles and the author, on the relative intellectual merits of Christianity and modern Infidelity.

The larger number of works published in vindication of Christianity labor under one of two defects.

The first is, the Christianity they defend is not defined. The reader not being put in possession of the specific data of the question at issue, rises after their perusal as ignorant as ever of what Christianity is, or of what constitutes Infidelity. This vagueness and uncertainty takes away from the sectarian works on this subject, which have fallen under the author's observation, all value as defences of Christianity.

The second is found in those publications which, assuming to defend Christianity against aggression or corruption from one quarter, rely upon arguments

which are retorted upon it with deadly effect from opposite but not less dangerous antagonisms. The ultra-Protestant controversialist, whose mind or limited sphere of view incapacitates him from taking in the whole bearings of the subject, habitually urges, as he thinks against Rome, arguments of a nature to subvert, not Rome, but Christianity and the Scriptures themselves. Works of this description, indiscriminately destructive of both the substance and corrupt additions of Christianity, teem from the press and supply the unbelieving with some of their most specious objections, especially against the Scriptures.

It is observable, also, that in many of these works the points selected for vindication bear so slightly, or not at all, on the doubts of gravest import in the minds of unbelievers, that, by appearing to ignore the real difficulties of the subject, the writers rather confirm than confute the Infidelity they combat.

The Author, in attempting to avoid these errors, may possibly have fallen into the commission of others not less grave. He has, however, done his best to keep himself clear of such an imputation; whether successfully or not must be left to the judgment of his reader.

The Orthodox Faith vindicated in this work is strictly that of the Anglo-Catholic Church of England,

as defined by the Standard common to herself and the whole of Catholic Christendom.

The Author feels that unless we can demonstrate that Infidelity, with all the intellect it can command, has no chance, on an appeal to sense and reason, of standing its ground against Christianity, we must either confess it as rational to be Infidels as Christians, or we must accept that form of Christianity which insists on the entire surrender of our reason to the fiat of its own authority. It is in this latter position that the Church of Rome, through the medium of certain of her most eminent theologians, is desirous to place every Christian not within her own pale. She would persuade us that as a rational system Christianity is not maintainable; that we have no alternative than to be Infidels if we follow Reason, or members of her community if we follow Faith. As a protest against so unseemly an assumption, as well as in the hope of calling back attention from petty religious differences to those great doctrines of Christ, which, before Rome had added a single figment of her own to the Catholic Faith, overthrew the organized Infidelity of the ancient heathen world, these papers are respectfully submitted to the consideration of the public.

As the principles of Infidelity are unfortunately not confined to any one class of society, the composi-

tion has been made as plain, and the diction as little technical, as the nature of the subjects under discussion admitted. The purport of the work will be well answered if it convinces even a single mind, among either rich or poor, of the utter falsehood and hollowness of that system of "swelling words" which, as Modern Unbelief, presumes to impeach the Divine origin of the religion of Christ, and substitue a claim of its own to the allegiance of educated and enlightened intellect.

Bognor, August 26, 1854.

CHRISTIANITY

AND

MODERN INFIDELITY.

CHRISTIAN. INFIDEL.

INFIDEL.

I HAVE, you see, surrounded myself with the productions of those able minds which, with myself, reject intellectual allegiance to Christianity—Strauss, Fichte, Martineau, Carlyle, Froude, Emerson, Parker, Hennell, Newman, and others, who, though not all on the same grounds, concur in the conclusion that the Scriptures are not inspired, nor the religion of the Scriptures to be accepted as of divine origin and force. This opinion constitutes what you, as a Christian, term infidelity. The question at issue between us is, Which of these two, Infidelity or Christianity—pure reason, or intellect, being judge—is the truth of God, of nature, and of the soul? In what order shall we conduct our discussion?

CHRISTIAN. In any way most satisfactory to your own judgment.

INF. I propose, then, first to examine the validity or nullity of such objections against Christianity

as, advanced by others, have produced the deepest impression on my own mind. Secondly, that we investigate such of the main doctrines of Christianity as in the greatest degree shock and offend my intellect. And lastly, that we confront the principal features of Christianity with those of Infidelity, and pronounce which of the two best entitles itself to the verdict of sense and reason.

Chr. I doubt the feasibility, in a discussion of this nature, of observing such order, without constantly fusing these three considerations in one and the same examination of a subject. We will, however, as well as we may, adhere to it generally.

Inf. I then, being an infidel, am to consider myself at liberty to use arguments of every fair and honorable description, and from every armory, against the religion you profess, without being chargeable with the remotest intention of wounding your feelings, or paining the conscientious sensibilities of your co-religionists.

Chr. Certainly—it is a passage of arms in the court of reason.

Inf. I may assault you thus in front, flank, or rear, with weapons and engines of contrary species and effect. The victory, if gained, must be acknowledged as such by the defeated party, be it effected by one, or any, or all united, of these hostile appliances.

Chr. Agreed.

Inf. Then again, I being infidel — that is, no believer in Christianity — may combat under any standard I please, provided it be not Christian; for

all standards not Christian are infidel. You, on the other hand, being not only Christian, but a Christian of a certain Church, must hoist the flag of that Church only. You must not assume at one moment the uniform and password of the Church of England, then in repelling an attack the Church of England is impotent to sustain, adopt the arms and cry of Rome; or, *vice versâ*, when mere Protestantism breaks down, throw yourself on Church principles; or, when Church principles explode, save yourself by flight behind the platitudes of Protestantism. Nor in your advocacy of Christianity must you, to serve different designs, propose it to me—now in the character of a Catholic, then of a Presbyterian, presently of a spiritual philanthropist—nor still less sink and ignore to-day, against an external foe, the very doctrines you chiefly allege and depend upon for successful resistance to-morrow, on different grounds, against an internal seceder or Nonconformist.

Chr. I concede all this.

Inf. It is fair you should. For if I hear an individual on one occasion at Exeter Hall, in some missionary meeting, describing Christianity as "covering the earth as the waters do the sea," and drawing all nations, kindred, and languages in the train of its triumphs, to suit his special convenience then—and I hear the same individual on another occasion, for some other convenience, proclaim the Church of Christ to be still, in the nineteenth century, only "a little and despised flock," I can only suppose such a person to be void of either sense or principle, or such Christianity to be not worth confutation. But this

expedient is, I regret to observe, a common trick with your orators and writers. They play fast and loose with their religion in such a way, that it would baffle the most patient inquirer to discover what their religion is. Thus, if I address a Protestant, "Sir, the great principle of Protestantism is, that every person should have the right of interpreting the Scriptures according to his or her private judgment," he will warmly assent, and add, that "such religious liberty is the most glorious privilege of Englishmen." If I proceed to exercise my Protestant right, "my glorious privilege," by interpreting certain portions of these Scriptures in a sense opposed to his own, I find him a very Proteus—he is no longer a Protestant, but a bigoted sectarian, intolerant of all other interpretations than his own; or a rigid, intractable High Churchman, commanding me to bow my rebellious neck to the authority of the public judgment of the Church. You will understand that infidelity may converse with such persons, but to reason with them, seeing they are their own contradictories and the refutations of their own principles, would be entirely supererogatory. Now what banner of Christianity do you raise, and under which alone do you engage in these lists against the shock of infidelity?

Chr. The banner of the Church of England.

Inf. Yes. But again, High Church or Low Church?

Chr. Is the Church the priesthood, or is it the priesthood and people united?

Inf. The priesthood and people in one body.

CHR. Then the banner of the Church of England, as a Church, must be one to whose inscription and motto, clergy and laity are alike sworn?

INF. Clearly.

CHR. The banner of the Church of England, then, under which I am content to come into collision with infidelity, is that of "The Scriptures and the three Creeds—the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian."

INF. Let our preliminary discussion be confined then to this point. But why do you select the Scriptures and the three Creeds, and not the Articles, for the standard of the Church of England?

CHR. Because, as you affirmed, not the clergy alone, but the clergy and laity, as one indivisible body, constitute the Church; the Articles, binding the clergy alone, cannot be such standard—the Scriptures, and the three Creeds professed in public liturgy by the mouths of both clergy and laity, thus binding both, must, of the whole Church, be the one common standard—and this is the standard I elevate against you.

INF. Solely because it is the standard of your Church? For no other reason?

CHR. It is the standard of the Church of England, because it is the standard of the orthodox faith of Christ and Christendom. By it the Church of England is part integral of that Catholic Apostolical Church, which in all ages has been the trustee and depository of the orthodox faith. Whether, therefore, you consider and deal with it as the criterion of the orthodox faith in Christendom at large, or in

England in particular, is immaterial. The banner is one and the same.

Inf. Here, then, our outposts must begin the battle. You use the term Orthodox Faith. What is this Orthodox Faith?

Chr. Cannot you define it?

Inf. I—an infidel?

Chr. It appears to me that an infidel ought to be able most accurately to define the propositions, as to the truth of which he professes himself an infidel. If, in ordinary life, I affirm I do not believe such-and-such a report, I am expected to be able to state clearly what the report is which I do not believe. You cannot, I conceive, until you have yourself defined the Orthodox Faith, profess yourself an infidel in it, for you cannot clearly know in what you are an infidel.

Inf. But supposing I desire to be an orthodox Christian, how am I, among the multitudinous sects of Christianity, to discover the Orthodox Faith? Not being able to discover it, I must remain an infidel; not in the sense of impugning, but of being utterly ignorant of true Christianity. What, therefore, again I ask, is this Orthodox Faith? for it is evident the pith of the whole matter is in the Orthodoxy, not the Faith. The grossest idolater has greater Faith than most Christians, but he has no Orthodoxy; his faith, as you would say, is simply superstition. So among Christian sects each professes to hold the orthodox faith, but where is an ignorant infidel to assure himself of finding it? The Roman Church avers it one thing—the Greek Church another—the

Anglican Church another: then suddenly starts up a Wesley, an Irving, a Rongé, claiming its discovery for the first time by himself. When, therefore, you quote the Orthodox Faith, may you not as well refer every man, with his Bible in his hand, to his own imagination? Is it not a phrase for every one's opinion in religion, claimed by each for himself, and conceded by none to his neighbor? It resembles the panacea which every empiric advertises as peculiarly his own discovery and property; warning, at the same time, the world against every competitor in the same profession as an ignoramus, an impostor, a non-qualified practitioner. How are we, the ignorant non-professionals, to decide when such doctors disagree?

Chr. Your present argument is unconsciously the Roman argument as advanced against the Bible. The Jews say it is one book, the Samaritans another, the Protestants another, the Mormonites another, and so forth. Who can tell what the Bible is?

Inf. And the argument is sound. Who can positively state which is the true Bible, or which is the orthodox faith? These fundamentals being uncertain, your whole religion, it follows, is an uncertainty also. How can you answer that initial objection?

Chr. As I intend to answer your subsequent objections; by analyzing them, by decomposing them, by examining what they really amount to. You say all the different churches differ in their definition ot the orthodox faith?

Inf. I do: and is it not a fact?

Chr. Pardon me. It is the reverse. Neither the

Roman, Greek, Eastern, or Anglican Churches hold different definitions of the orthodox faith. All hold the same three Symbola or Creeds of the one faith in Christ. Ask any member of any one of these Churches "whether he does not hold any clause you please to specify in any one of these Creeds as a divine truth."

Inf. I would ask then a Greek, whether he holds the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, as interpolated in the Nicene Creed, for a divine truth?

Chr. He would certainly answer "Yes." He would tell you his objection was not to the doctrine, but to its after insertion as a Western Church interpolation in a Creed once for all settled and limited. And with this view many in the Western Church sympathize, holding at the same time the truth of such procession in its full integrity. Mention a second clause.

Inf. I cannot call to mind another.

Chr. There is no other. That is the only shadow, for it is nothing but a shadow, of difference in the definition of the Orthodox Faith, as laid down in the three Universal Creeds by the whole Catholic Church of Christ, and accepted and taught by the same.

Inf. Do you mean to say that whoever holds the three Creeds, the Apostles', the Nicæan, and the Athanasian, does therein and thereby hold the Orthodox Catholic faith?

Chr. Certainly. They are the accepted Creeds of universal Christendom: to accept them is to accept

the Orthodox Faith, to reject them is to reject the Orthodox Faith.

Inf. How then comes Rome to insist upon the acceptance of another, the Tridentine Creed, as an essential part of the Orthodox faith? Ha, how is that? and Rome is at least one half of Christendom. Now what becomes of your non-difference?

Chr. It is not affected by such a fact, any more than it would be by your citing the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Church instead of the Tridentine Creed of Rome. Neither the one nor the other are acknowledged by the rest of Christendom; they are articles partial, not universal. The rest of Christendom need in no way accept them. Not accepting them, it remains as Orthodox and Catholic as ever, because it holds that which held alone and by themselves, without excrescence or addition, has always constituted both Orthodoxy and Catholicity—the Three creeds. Neither, again, is Rome or England less orthodox or catholic, because it pleases them to symbolize or articulize other, as they judge, divine truths of Revelation. Reject them or accept them, you are not, provided you stand fast on these universal Creeds, less or more Orthodox or Catholic.

Inf. But no one can become a minister of the English Church, unless he accepts the Thirty-nine Articles.

Chr. True.

Inf. Yet you say his acceptance of them does not make him a whit more orthodox or catholic?

Chr. It does not. They may confirm him in his catholicity and orthodoxy, or they may test him in

them, that's all. They do not bind, nor are they imposed upon the laity; yet a layman who never signs them, but repeats as his confession of faith the Three Creeds in the liturgy of the Church, is as thoroughly catholic and orthodox as the clergyman who signs and is bound by them. They might be added to or entirely cancelled to-morrow, without affecting the catholicity or orthodoxy of the Church, always provided the standards of the Universal Faith remained intact and inviolate.

Inf. That opens a wider view than I anticipated of the Unity of Christendom in faith.

Chr. We are to debate, at your request, not on petty, frivolous points of difference,—black gowns or white gowns, reading or intoning, singing or chanting, low waistcoats or high waistcoats,—nor upon those profound, and perhaps unholy speculations about predestination and free will, reprobation and election, which are utterly beyond the capacities of limited beings like ourselves to determine, but on those great, salient, prominent doctrines of Christianity, which, as point-blank opposed to heathenism, overthrew Heathenism and the whole heathen Infidelity. These doctrines thus laid down and accepted by the universal Church are Catholic as opposed to other doctrines, which, however true, have not been so laid down or accepted, and are therefore not Catholic. And they are orthodox, because the only possible, true, final, and authoritative construction of the faith, as taught and delivered from the beginning to the Church of Christ, must be the construction put upon it and accepted by such Universal Church of Christ itself.

These Creeds constitute that construction, and are therefore Orthodoxy, or the right and true interpretation of the faith. They were universally put forward from every branch of the Church, as the interpretation such branch had from the first admitted and taught; they were consequently universally laid down, and subsequently in their promulgation universally again received. In other words, the General Councils did no more in framing them than give back to Christendom, in a summary form, what they themselves had from Universal Christendom brought and received. So far then from no one knowing what the Orthodox Faith is, no one that attends divine worship in our Church need be, or indeed with common attention can be, ignorant of it.

Inf. But suppose they never attend Church,—myself for instance?

Chr. Then in lieu of saying "who can know what the orthodox faith is?" you should frankly say, "I don't wish to know, I don't care to know, and I won't know what the Orthodox Faith or heterodox heresy is; they are all the same to me. I don't care whether Christendom really holds Unity of Faith at the bottom of all its different hierarchies or not." But is it just to say, "Who can know?" when a very brief interpellation brings out the great fact, that nothing is easier than to ascertain that all Christendom has one and the same foundation of both Orthodoxy and Catholicity? It is not, therefore, every man's imagination, a phantom in a cloud, metamorphosing itself to each spectator's fancy; it is not the sand, but the pyramid; not the whirlwind, but the

rock; not a morass, but a high and very distinct way; nothing uncertain, formless, or shifting, but an indestructible, inerasible seal, always at hand, to be put, as it were by God Himself, before the eyes of every one who really desires to see what is "That truth in Jesus which saves the soul." It is not difficult then to know what the Orthodox Faith is, for it is not difficult to read and digest the three Creeds of the Catholic Church.

Inf. It is not so hard, certainly, according to your explanation; but a Romanist might give me a very different explanation. How then am I to decide?

Chr. No Romanist lives who will not exhort you to believe and hold these Creeds. Do that first—being done, other creeds are in my opinion superfluous. If he think otherwise, exercise then your own judgment. But thus far, Anglican, Roman, Greek, all Christendom agree—to this point all would concur in leading you.

Then as to your next assertion, that every man thinks that he has the orthodox faith whilst at the same time he refuses to concede the possession of it to his neighbor; if it were so, it would only prove that every man without exception was convinced there was an orthodox faith, that in his own case at least there was such a thing as special revelation, and that for some mysterious reasons God had refused his neighbor the illumination He had mercifully granted to him. How would the concession of this assist your infidelity? To me it only appears as an intensified application of a divine truth in our own favor, a specimen of Judaizing Christianity, an

attempt to roll up the standard of the Church within some presumed experience of our own. But it has no relation to infidelity.

INF. But it staggers an infidel disposed to consider the truth of Christianity, when its first aspect thus presents such an infinite variety of individual orthodoxies, treating every other Christian opinion but his own as an heterodoxy.

CHR. We said that the whole Church of Christ had both received and established the Criterion of Orthodoxy, did we not?

INF. Yes.

CHR. No Catholic Churchman dissents from that criterion. No catholic churchman therefore can possibly regard any man whatever who holds the Three Creeds as guilty of heterodoxy. If he did, he would in that degree swerve from the Church: he would so far be a dissenter, not a churchman. Your objection therefore applies simply to schismatics, and these I must leave to vindicate themselves. It does not apply to nine-tenths of professing Christians; we, for instance, concede orthodoxy to the Roman and Eastern Churches on the Three Creeds. On the same creeds they concede it to each other and to us. These creeds are the criterion, and therefore beyond them or on one side of them concession or non-concession is immaterial. To hold them in common is to hold the community of the orthodox faith. Even in the schismatic view therefore the objection militates against infidelity; on the Church view, it is based on an erroneous assumption and falls entirely to the ground.

Inf. But, practically, Unity of Worship at any rate does not exist. An Anglican will not worship with a Romanist; a Romanist will not pray with an Anglican; a dissenter holds and avoids Rome as the scarlet harlot, the pope as the man of sin, thinking also the Church of England little better than a red rag or purple remnant of the same Corruptress. Practically it is so; your orthodox unity is but a paper unity; as living men you are a body torn into pieces, not two limbs of which will consent to act and harmonize together.

Chr. Let us again analyze. All Roman Catholics will worship in common, will they not?

Inf. Of course.

Chr. There at once is an Unity of Worship amongst two hundred millions, a vast consolidation in itself. Next, all Christians of the Greek Church will pray and worship in common: another consolidation of one hundred millions. You cannot call such masses "pieces," otherwise than as the sun or a planet is a "piece" of the universe. Compared to such enormous populations any single European kingdom is indeed a "fragment," much more "a mere chip" of civilization than these are of Christianity. Thirdly, no Anglican refuses to pray with either Romanist or Greek; nor any Protestant, I believe, with an Anglican. Thus there does exist such a practical unity as considering the freedom of mind and spirit, therefore the liability to opinionative differences which Christianity generates is a fact unparalleled, and, only because it is a fact, credible. But, further, your present objection does not in reality touch Christianity itself, it only touches it—as the devil himself

always has and can touch it—"in its heel," as man's nature incarnates it with its own weakness and passions. Mankind will not be of one heart and of one mind; the not being so you impute to Christianity, not to man's nature, refusing to see that the greatest unity that ever has been effected of that nature, in its hope, faith, and charities, is the act of that Christianity alone. Introduce the simplest question for free discussion into the House of Commons, that House will split into at least two, perhaps into half-a-dozen judgments upon it: is that an argument against the existence or utility of the House of Commons or of the English Constitution? If its members agree to discuss and differ within the Constitution, is it not rather a positive proof of the excellency of that constitution which permits full liberty of mind and speech, but yet deals with any attempt to dissolve the unity of the empire as capital treason against itself? The crime would be in the criminal, not in the constitution. So the sin of schism is in our individual nature, not any inherency or result of Christianity.

Inf. Rome is not an individual nature: she is, as you say, a mass of two hundred millions, and she treats you, the Anglican Church, as the great schism of the West,—she does not and will not pray with you,—where then is the Unity, when only one party does not decline, the other rejects, Common Prayer?

Chr. What then? I am not to answer for Rome as Rome extra the Catholic Church. Let Rome, as Joash said of Baal of old, plead for herself and her own peculiar Romanisms. I do not bring forward mere Anglicanisms, why do you bring forward mere

Romanisms? These and such like questions form questions between England and Rome, not between Christianity and Infidelity.

Inf. But you must admit such lack of Unity, whichever side be in fault, to be a shameful spectacle in your religion.

Chr. Quoad the great Creeds of that religion, I again remind you, such lack of unity does not exist; quoad the chasms which divide our Spires as they each rise from the foundation of those creeds, the infidel has nothing to do. His objection is not "your Spires are different and separate, but the very foundation on which they all rest is utterly unsound." On that objection we confront him. If he shift his ground to the different architecture of the spires themselves, he ceases to be an infidel, and we cease arguing with him as such. Is not the truth this? You do not wish Christianity proved divine: you look out for the strongest apparent arguments against its divinity: want of unity strikes you as being one of such. On examination you discover a fearful fundamental Unity, fearful I mean to such a frame of mind. You then fall back upon poor human nature, as if that were Christianity; or upon Rome, as if she were the Church Catholic. If, on the other hand, I forgot myself and quoted the communion of Rome to you as an example of unity, you would at once retort, "Unity! the unity of night! of darkness! of ignorance! of the Dead Sea!"

Inf. Quite fair, too.

Chr. I think not. It would be fair, were I a Romanist; the attack would be on Rome, and as a

Romanist I should defend myself and her. I am an Anglican Catholic, and am not called upon to answer any objection which applying to Rome does not apply to catholicity.

Inf. Nevertheless, numbers tell: when Rome with her two hundred millions treats your dozen millions or two dozen millions as heretics, when all red-hot Protestants damn her in return as the lady of Babylon; such a spirit in a Church which professes to be divine charity itself is enough to make and to keep one an infidel.

Chr. Which is as much as to say that just in proportion as the spirit of the Devil prevails against the spirit of Christ in the Church, so much less effective will the Church be against the devil or the world, so much less powerful will she be to convert souls or extend her Master's faith. And who doubts it, infidel or Christian? That which you now state is a truism in which all concur, which all feel, only the Infidel exults, the Christian mourns for it. It does not enter into our debate at all: no one disputes that the less of Christ we have, the less likely we are to make others Christians; what has such a wretched fact to do with the truth itself of Christ and his faith? Nothing. He has Himself told us that it would be a miserable fact and produce miserable effects: that the want of this unity amongst all believers would be the most potent of all bars to the conversion of the world: that its existence would more than any thing else prevent faith in the world. "I pray that all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us:

that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me." But how is the existence of such a spirit, any more than the existence of sundry other vices amongst professing communities, any real plea for infidelity? We will not be Christians, because all other men are not already angels. We will not be sober, because all other men are not temperate. We will not believe God, because men that do believe in Him are not yet "perfect in one." I submit there is neither logic nor intellect in such ratiocination, "untempered mortar," as at the best it is. All men may be liars to their profession, liars from the very fact of that profession which they belie being the truth. Every Christian is in this sense more or less a liar in life: no Christian fulfils the whole truth which he professes and does really believe. Is he therefore a hypocrite? Far from it. Or is that holiness of which he falls short, because he falls short of it, therefore a lie? He knows even from that which he has attained of it the very contrary: it is a truth strong as the everlasting hills, which no short-comings of his own can in a single grain of its existence detract from or affect. The errors of human nature under the Gospel are not the test of the truth of that Gospel, they are nothing but a witness to one of its first doctrines, "That the very best men fall short of Christ, the glory of God." Yet you object the existence of the very fact of division which the Gospel in its truth exposes, in its pity prays for, and in its power cures, as an argument against the truth of that Gospel; that Gospel and yourself agreeing in the fact, only whilst you quote it as a reason for infidelity in God,

the Gospel would bring you to that God to correct and remove it. But in another view, supposing the whole Church were unanimous, and such unanimity were guided by a central head, supported by the whole body of the laity of the Church, would infidelity or the world even as it is join and approve of it? Would not that very state, the non-existence of which it now objects to the Church as a reason for not believing in it, be the very last state in which it would wish to see the Church existing, flourishing, and reigning?

Inf. Possibly—for it might be an intolerable tyranny. Three or four hundred millions ruled spiritually by one man or by one Lay-Church conclave and democracy!—the world would not in these days for a moment submit to such a revival of ecclesiastical supremacy, lay or clerical.

Chr. The Unity of the Church, then, would not be tolerated by such as were not of the Church?

Inf. To speak frankly, I do not think it would.

Chr. Not if that Unity inferred, as it does, one mind and heart among all the laity of the Church in government and doctrines?

Inf. Make your conscience easy. It will never be.

Chr. Why not?

Inf. The world, outside such a lay and clerical Unity, would never permit it—it would be a Lay-Papacy.

Chr. Yet that state which Infidelity would never permit, which of all possibilities it most deprecates and exerts itself the most strenuously to prevent, is that state the falling short of which by the Church,

through, in great measure, the machinations of this Infidelity itself, is alleged as a principal argument against belief in such a Church and its doctrines. Is not this something beyond inconsistency? Has it not the appearance of intellectual hypocrisy?

Inf. Let us concede then that the banner of the Church of England is the banner of the Orthodox Faith in Christendom and England alike: that in the acceptance of the Scriptures and the Three Creeds consists the acceptance of the Orthodox Faith; that in this faith—saying nothing of extraneous additions, Protestant or Papal—there is a living spiritual Unity of four hundred millions of souls. Our relative positions are thus fixed. I have a definite system and a definite standard of that system in arms before me; and unless I subvert the one and capture the other, Orthodox Christianity retains her ancient supremacy. These preliminaries settled, I shall, as we agreed, proceed first with certain grave objections against the Scriptures of this Christianity. Are you acquainted with Newman's writings?

Chr. With the writings of both the brothers—to which do you refer?

Inf. To my fellow-infidel, Francis William Newman. Some of the difficulties he specifies appear to me insurmountable; the more so, as they come from a person of irreproachable morality, which, you will I suppose admit, adds great weight to them.

Chr. A certain degree of moral weight to his objections a moral man may justly claim—and such is Mr. Newman. But I am at a loss to see what greater *intellectual* force the objections of Mr. New-

man can carry than those of Rousseau or Voltaire—characters the reverse of moral. If pure morality of life is to settle the question between Christianity and Infidelity, infidels themselves will confess their position ridiculously hopeless. Infidelity hitherto has been put forward and accepted as identical with exemption from all spiritual and moral obligations; the only compliance it allowed was with the demands of the law or of personal honor; and of the latter, every individual was himself the judge. And from such obligations it is a notorious fact that infidels *have* always exempted themselves. The best we can say of your two best men in this respect, Gibbon and Hume, is, that they were not coarse voluptuaries—they were not indecorous Epicureans. But of active morality on behalf of others I never heard them accused. And as to the rest of the professing infidels of the last and preceding centuries in England and on the Continent, their works are the manifesto of the principles on which they lived. It is not easy to select one who did not justify the utmost freedom of conduct upon this very ground, that he was an Infidel. The phase has now changed. Few of our infidel writers in the present generation charge themselves with personal licentiousness or profanity; an alteration upon which infidelity is very much to be congratulated. But for each moral infidel, a thousand moral Christians can yet be counted: granting therefore a certain moral force to the objection of a moral infidel, the moral force which must on the same rule be conceded to the belief of a thousand moral Christians, would in such a discus-

sion as ours reduce its value to nothing, or rather decide the question summarily in favor of Christianity.

Inf. But Infidelity has now nevertheless an advantage in the personal characters of many of its advocates, which it never perhaps previously possessed—with that additional strength you must be prepared to cope?

Chr. True. But the right view, I conceive, of the matter is this. If infidelity be true in itself, no amount of improbity or immorality, in persons professing infidelity, will falsify the truth of their intellectual opinions. So also with Christianity and Christians. The personal worthlessness or worth of an astronomer does not affect the truths of astronomy. The religion of a man is not necessarily true because he is a Socrates or a Zeno in morality; nor necessarily false because he is a Charles or a Louis in immorality—unless it is patent that in either case the life is as naturally and inevitably the production of the principles avowed, as an apple is of the apple-tree or the hair of the animal body, in which case the life is but the expletive of the religion. Let us regard it in another light. Francis William Newman is a man of unimpeachable moral life; so is his more celebrated brother, the Oratorian, John Henry Newman. The latter, as a conscientious Roman Catholic, does not believe his brother to be within the pale of salvation; the former, again, affirms of his brother's faith, "For the peculiarities of Romanism, I feel nothing, and I can pretend nothing but contempt, hatred, disgust, or horror—a system of falsehood,

fraud, unscrupulous and unrelenting ambition."[1] Here are two brothers, diametrically opposed in religion, yet both of more than ordinary excellence and purity of moral character.

INF. What signifies it, then, whether they are Roman Catholics or Infidels: cannot they both enter heaven?

CHR. That is the very point to be solved.

INF. I see no difficulty in its solution.

CHR. Do you not? What is the worth of a man's personal morality if the whole weight and influence of his character be devoted to color and support an enormous system of "falsehood, fraud, unscrupulous and unrelenting ambition," which is what Francis William Newman affirms his brother's religion to be? Personal morality becomes, on such a supposition, a frightful misnomer—it ceases to exist—it is as the countenance of moral Brutus was to conspiracy and murder. It is absurd to speak of a man as moral who applies his whole energies to the perpetuating and extending of a thoroughly depraved and criminal system. His own morality is as a drop of dew compared to the deluge of immorality he lets loose on society, if the system he represents be such as Francis William Newman describes Roman Catholicism to be. In such case, personal morality would be, even in commercial judgment, only a white and jewelled hand executing a forgery. The white hand, the gentlemanly address and demeanor, would pass the forgery, but you would not say they were any compensation for the injury inflicted by the act on society.

[1] "Phases of Faith," p. 72.

INF. I would treble the penalty.

CHR. On the other hand, if the Roman Catholic be, as John Henry Newman believes, the only God-appointed way of salvation, what is the worth, or wherein consists the virtue of Francis William Newman's morality, when he denounces that "only way" as a system of "falsehood, fraud, unscrupulous and unrelenting ambition?" If John Henry Newman be right, then is Francis William Newman doing all in his power, with all the great weight of his moral character, to ruin irretrievably the souls of men, by inducing them to regard the "only way" of salvation as a system of falsehood. Both these brothers are equally sincere, moral, and conscientious in their convictions, but one of the two is of necessity a most pernicious character; one of the two must, just in proportion to the influence he sways, be inflicting ruin on the cause of truth and the souls of men. Whichever it be, can he who has destroyed be admitted, on any plea, to the same approbation as he who has saved souls? In the decision of so momentous a question, the petty circumstances whether the individual dresses as a pietist or ordinary person, drinks wine or water only, eats meat or vegetables only, starves or indulges, are lost in comparison with the character and general effects of the system which that individual represents and would render supreme. I am far from maintaining "the Cause" to be every thing; the characters of its supporters, nothing. By the latter, we are often necessitated for a time to form our conclusions of the former. But I affirm, that correct habits of personal, social, or monastic

life must be estimated in an individual as dust when balanced against the results of that man's mental and doctrinal teachings on perhaps millions of recipient souls. The responsibility attached to intellect is as much greater than that attached to morality, as the world of mind is greater than a man's domestic or social circle. If Francis William Newman make you an infidel, you are in his brother's belief lost forever. Adjust his morality against your eternal ruin; is it not swallowed up as an invisible atom in the most permanent of crimes? Is it not as if a water-drinker should poison a city reservoir, or a punctual early-riser set fire to the Bank? Or if John Henry Newman convert you to Rome you become, in his brother's opinion, the member and abettor of a system of fraud and falsehood. If you prove true to that system, you must yourself become false and fraudful; remaining so, your soul is lost; against that loss, poise your proselytizer's moral character. It has become a nonentity, entirely out of the question, further than as a vizor and decoy—nothing more than if an assassin who poignarded you was yet scrupulously clean in person and correct in costume.

Inf. Who, then, is competent to judge between two systems the antipodes of each other, especially when the defenders of each are equally moral and conscientious, both of great erudition and varied accomplishments, in perfect command of all the data and advantages necessary to enable them to form a right conclusion—yet one diverges from your Church to Romanism, the other to Infidelity.

Chr. My dealing is at present with the Infidel. I have stated, in a distinct work,[1] my reasons as an Anglo-Catholic for rejecting the additions of Rome to the Scriptures and the Three Creeds. Within the Three Creeds and the Catholic Canon England and Rome are one—beyond it they split and differ. But such difference is one of degrees in faith, radically distinct from that which exists between both of us and infidelity. I am now confronting infidelity on intellectual grounds. If morality is to be the test, not another word need pass between us—the victory of Christianity has long since been won, and never in this respect doubted or disputed for eighteen centuries. But we are so confident that intellectually as well as morally Infidelity has not a shadow of a chance against Christianity, that we cast aside the morality or immorality, the good, bad, or indifferent lives of its impugners—Voltaire, D'Alembert, Hobbes, Paine, Robespierre, Marat, or their contraries, such as Strauss and Newman—as irrelevant to the mental merits of the issue. Christianity can well afford, I think, to present Infidelity with all it would demand on that score, without giving away a particle of its real strength. Newman, you observed, has impressed you much.

Inf. I have been much struck by certain of the difficulties he brings forward in his "Phases of Faith" against the credibility of the Bible. Most of the arguments which he advances are of course resuscitations of old objections, which perhaps because they are worn and hackneyd, or because they do not

[1] "Vindication of the Church of England." Rivingtons.

in effect succeed against Christianity, I am disposed to lay little stress upon. Unsuccessful objections, fifty times repeated, and always with the same failure, speak for themselves—that however sound they appear to the disputant, the world at large pronounces them frivolous or nugatory. Mere verbal, incidental, or petty inculpations, of so mighty a system as it must be confessed Christianity, rightly or wrongly, is, are as little likely to overthrow the hold it has established upon the superstitious faculties of mankind, as the peckings of a hen, or the marble shots of a boy, to loosen the mortar and stone of an ancient Norman stronghold. I care therefore little for such disputations as the two Genealogies; or at what time, or if at all, Christ was in Egypt; or if the narratives of the resurrection can in every minute point be made to accord. These are rather dissertations for microscopic minds than questions by which to test the vitality or divinity of Christianity. But those I have selected from Newman's "Phases of Faith," are of such range and calibre, as becomes artillery brought to bear upon such a spiritual Gibraltar as your Christian Church. They are broad, massive, radical statements, aimed at once at the root of the matter, at the foundation-stones of your religion. I will adduce them in order. The first is this assertion:

"Prophecy is generally regarded as a leading evidence of the divine origin of Christianity. But this had also proved to me a more and more mouldering prop. As to the prophecies of the Pentateuch, they abound as to the times which precede

the century of Hezekiah: higher than which we cannot trace the Pentateuch. No prophecy of the Pentateuch can be proved to have been fulfilled, which had not already been fulfilled before Hezekiah's day."[1]

Can you refute this last especial statement, which to my mind infers the entirely human fabrication of the oldest portion of your Scriptures. What prophecy of the Pentateuch can be proved to be fulfilled which had not already been fulfilled before Hezekiah's day?

Chr. Does Newman mean visual or oral prophecy? Prophecy spoken to the ear, or prophecy acted to the eye, or prophecy combining both oral and visual delivery?

Inf. He does not specify. He affirms prophecy generally; if there are distinctions, take the last you have mentioned, which combines the two kinds, oral and visual.

Chr. Genesis is the first book of the Pentateuch. The twenty-second chapter contains what Christians consider a typical or esoteric prophecy of the Crucifixion of Christ, and of the birth of the Catholic Church. The visible signs of this sacramental act are,—

A father, distinguished, for certain reasons, as the Father of the Faithful—Abraham. A son—miraculously begotten by the Word of Promise, not by the operation of nature, and on the preservation of whose life and consequent progeny entirely depended the realization of many sublime and celestial engagements to his race. A mountain—Moriah, in

[1] "Phases of Faith," pp. 113, 114.

Palestine, which in one sense, that of birth, was the native country of such son; in another sense, that of race, was only the land of his temporary sojourn. The sacrifice of this son by his own father, commanded by Divine authority; the son bearing himself the altar-wood on which he was to be sacrificed; the father nevertheless proceeding with him. The son bound and laid by his father on such altar, so borne and constructed. The sacrifice itself, though in act prevented, in type fully consummated — a death inflicted which yet was no death, for the son lives after such death. A name assigned the mountain, to distinguish it as the exact spot of the whole world where the great act thus predicted would in the sight of all nations take place: "Jehovah-Jireh, in the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen." The creation out of this sacrifice, after its death, of a Seed which was to be multiplied as the stars of heaven, to possess the gate of its enemies, and in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

First, for the visual part of this prophecy. Is there any record of such a sacrifice as is here described taking place before the days of Hezekiah, on Mount Moriah, the mountain on which Jerusalem and the Temple were subsequently built, and of which Calvary formed an eminence?

Inf. I cannot recollect any.

Chr. No one, I believe, would assert the existence of a shadow of evidence to such effect.

Inf. But is it, in fact, a Prophecy at all, and has it been fulfilled since Hezekiah's day?

Chr. To believe that it has, is part of that faith

which constitutes us Christians, in contradistinction to those who believe that it has not—Infidels. To us the visual part of this prophecy explains itself as clearly as the representation of the tragedy of Julius Cæsar presents to an historic audience his fall and death in the Capitol. We believe that in this type Abraham and Isaac bear the same relationship to God and to Jesus Christ, as the representatives of Cæsar and Cassius in such a drama, do to Cæsar and Cassius themselves. As these latter represent to the audience what was indeed transacted at the Capitol, so Abraham and Isaac represented to the ancient Church what was to be transacted at a future time on Mount Moriah. Such as had full faith that such an act would be consummated for the salvation of mankind, became by such faith "the faithful"—"the Church"—heirs, therefore, of all the Divine promises sealed by the blood of so awful a victim. We who now believe that it has been effected, become by the same belief members of the same church, heirs of the same promises as they of old; only they looked forward, we look backward, to the Great Sacrifice itself. To the realization of the promises they and we—they in Paradise, we on earth—look forward in common as to one inclusive heaven. Neither they without us, nor we without them, are to be glorified. We hold, therefore, that in this dramatic parable of the Kingdom of God given to the ancient family of the faithful, Abraham signifies Almighty God, the Father of the Faithful—of all that believe in Jesus Christ. Isaac is Jesus Christ, born not by nature, but of the Holy Ghost

and the Blessed Virgin. Of Mount Moriah, where the prophetic type was acted, and to which the Church constantly looked as the future scene of its fulfilment, Mount Calvary is, as we observed, an eminence. The altar-wood is the Cross borne by the co-eternal Son Himself. "Jehovah-Jireh"—the Crucifixion was prepared and seen on this Mount of the Lord before the face of all nations, on the national Feast of the Passover, in the very centre, as it were, of the civilized world, between the Eastern and Western divisions of the Roman Empire. Christ, the Lamb of God, slain before the foundation of the world, was there laid by His own Almighty Father, as the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, upon this Altar of the Cross; He was "smitten of God:" "the Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all." And yet, though thus dead and buried, He rose again the third day, and ascended "whither he was before," to the same Father, to inherit the same glory as he had with the Father before the world began. The Christian Church, therefore, maintains the visual part of this prophecy to have been fulfilled eighteen hundred and fifty-four years since on Mount Calvary.

Inf. But I, as an Infidel, deny that it is either prophetic of such an event, or, if prophetic, that it has been so fulfilled.

Chr. Of course you do; otherwise you would not be an infidel. Vast, radical, fundamental differences, high as heaven, deep as hell, exist between Christianity and Infidelity. No morality can fill the infinite gulf up; no philosophy can bridge it; no knowledge ignore it. These differences will stand forth more

distinctly as we proceed. But what I have now to maintain is, that, in these differences, intellect and reason are with the believer and against the unbeliever.

Inf. Do you aver that reason and intellect are with you in the very point under examination—a father commanded to slay his son?

Chr. In this case entirely. Were I an infidel, neither believing prophecy nor its fulfilment, but rejecting the whole scheme of Gospel salvation,—regarding this act in an isolated light, not in its illustrative connection with an eternal and ever-progressive Spiritual System, I should, with you, pronounce it contrary to nature and reason. That System being now revealed to me, as I believe, of God, I see that unless the father had been commanded himself to offer up his son, there would not to the Ancient Church have been in this solemn act of sacrifice any representation or teaching whatever of that most blessed truth which lies at the foundation of the Church's faith—that the sacrifice of Christ is the sacrifice made and offered up by the Almighty Father Himself to reconcile the world unto Himself. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten son, to the end that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."[1] On this truth reposes our whole faith, that the Gospel is not merely the dispensation but the evidential act of the precedent love of God to us, the creatures He, from the moment of our creation, designed to reign with Him in a blessed immortality. Sin and its consequences brought us

[1] St. John iii. 16.

so fearfully into collision with God's holiness, that his eternal love for us and our souls could find no scope for action, consistently with such holiness, towards us, in the condition to which we had reduced ourselves—enemies to it in the very spirit of our minds. We were, therefore, by the same eternal love which created us at first, to be created anew. This new creation in Christ originates solely and proceeds solely on the divine fact, that however low our race degraded itself, the love of God towards us has never for a moment been quenched or diminished. But unless the Ancient Church had been made to see that it was the Father Himself whose will thus decreed, and whose hand thus executed, the atoning sacrifice between his justice against sin and his love for our souls, what assurance could they have had that this sacrifice was, indeed, not of man, nor of the will of men, but of the supreme and almighty Creator of heaven and earth Himself? That assurance was given them: they believed it, and such belief became the "righteousness of Christ" to them. Had another than the father been commanded to offer up "his son, his only son Isaac," then this great type would have broken down, and failed to teach the Ancient Church in the very article on which it was designed to be the revelation of God to them—that the sacrifice of our spiritual restoration is the sacrifice of the Father Himself, out of that love wherewith He had from the beginning loved us, and the full flow of which our fall in Adam alone had interrupted. I maintain, therefore, the command in this instance to Abraham

to be in complete harmony with the reason and intellect of every man who believes and comprehends the Gospel scheme of salvation. But to you, the Infidel, not so believing, but objecting to the command as in the last degree contrary to the first instincts of nature, my reply upon the narrative itself, without reference to its subsidiary character as a manifestation of the Gospel, is—The same God who commanded, stopped also the sacrifice. Your objection, therefore, neutralizes itself, and yet demands from you this explanation—Why was the sacrifice up to a certain point commanded by Divine authority; and beyond such point, which, according to the Christian system, completes the visual type, by the same authority not permitted to proceed? It is thus that many objections of infidelity are to us, who know the Gospel, confirmations of our faith. The fact that it was Abraham the father who was commanded to lay the wood of the altar on his son, and bind him, and, in type, slay him, proves to us that the God who did thus, according to the type, sacrifice his only-begotten Son, is indeed the Author of the type and of the Scriptures in which that type is recorded.

Inf. This ratiocination is plausible but not convincing, as you adduce no evidence beyond your faith that this fulfilment has really taken place in Mount Moriah.

Chr. We consider the historical or external evidence, which establishes that the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ in every way corresponded to this typical description of such a sacrifice, incontrovertible. We

also consider the Pentateuch as beyond cavil the work of the great Jewish legislator. We find the type and antitype of two of the most extraordinary facts recorded in all history or in all literature to be explanatory of each other. But this single type being, though not a minimum, yet only one of many illustrations of our faith, we bring it into court and comparison with all the rest of the voluminous evidence in favor of Christianity. The concert is complete. We feel ourselves rationally compelled to believe. I venture to affirm, that no intellectual Christian ever became such except through the process of Infidelity. You must not suppose that I or other educated Christians have not passed through the same spiritual agonisms as to the truth or falsehood of Christianity as you are now undergoing. To suppose so is, I think, a common error on the part of Infidels. Most educated Christians have been infidels. The same examination, research, science, or conscience, which discovers to them mysteries in Christianity, discovers also to them insurmountable contradictions and absurdities in Infidelity. And therefore, not because they can explain every thing in Christianity, but because, so far as it is explicable, it forces their intellectual assent, their intellect succumbs to it in its integrity in both the intelligible and in that which is at present unintelligible—the Mysterious.

Inf. Permit me. Your religion imparts to you enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is soul-action. We Infidels have, if you Christians have, souls: yet we have not soul-action. Why? We are content with our or-

ganization and repudiate other influence than such as this organization exercises of itself upon us. I admit that, putting aside Christianity, creation remains no less a tremendous mystery; so great and frightful a mystery in the very permission and extension of misery and pain, that I do not, by rejecting Christianity, approach an inch the nearer to its solution. I only reject one scheme, among many, which pretend to its solution. Perhaps it is not solvable; perhaps from the very nature of the materials of the universe, the meaning of the terms "evil" and "good" are not fixable. You must admit that which is "good" under certain circumstances to be positively "evil" under others. And we both admit certain fundamental instincts of nature to be, if any thing can be so called, sanctities. Now, in this case of Abraham, there is a command, violating this sacred instinct of our own nature. I take up the Bible and read these words, "It came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Offer up thine only son Isaac for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."[1] Conceding, as I am prepared to do, that the identity between this mountain and Calvary, between the very process, mode, and order of the Isaacal and Christian sacrifices are complete, I by no means admit the Divine authority of this transaction and its inferences. I appeal to you, if you, having an only son, the hope of your race, heard from earth, heaven, or hell, a command, "Sacrifice him with your own hand," could you believe

[1] Gen. xxii. 1, 2.

such to be the voice of the Creator of our natural instincts? Is it possible it could be?

Chr. Most possible.

Inf. How in, for instance, this case?

Chr. God is the Creator of both our natural powers and of the instincts resultant from their use. He has, therefore, if we proceed on the question of right, the same undoubted right of commanding us to devote both to Him, as he has of commanding us to devote our money, time, or devotion to Him.

Inf. Granted, granted! But here is the crux. We are certain the God of nature has implanted in us such affections and antipathies as our nature possesses.

Chr. Not as our present nature; but proceed.

Inf. Parental affection is perhaps the strongest instinct of nature; yet in Abraham's case this is overridden by—what shall I call it?—something termed God commanding him to make to this God a sacred immolation of his son. The statement of itself is enough to make a man of any natural affections an infidel.

Chr. Or a Christian.

Inf. How possibly so?

Chr. I am not adducing now the notorious facts of society, that such parents as are not indeed Christian do sacrifice their children without the slightest reference to natural affection, to the most contemptible and degraded idols: they murder the souls of such children for the sake of their own temporal aggrandizement. I reject entirely the idea that a parent who has no natural affection towards his God, can have any true natural affection towards his own children.

Inf. Why, the very savage has such.

Chr. Far from it; the savage will educate his child to steal, rob, murder, assassinate; and doing all this himself, will do so with all the affection of his nature, such as it is, to his child. The thief in London will, with all affection for his child, yet bring it up thoroughly a thief: in higher stations, the most worthless woman of fashion will, with all affection for her daughter, bring her up as a heartless, soulless, most contemptible frivolist. On the facts, therefore, of human nature, savage or refined, I might, I think, refute your notion that interference in the abstract between parent and child is in any degree unnatural.

Inf. But in the concrete, as here—interference authorizing, in fact, murder. Strong language, but Christianity is strong; therefore answer it.

Chr. "Thou shalt do no murder," from the oracles of the same Deity, would prove the inapplicability of such a term to the sacrifice of Isaac. It is absurd to say that the Author and Giver of all life can be guilty in taking away his own gift. If you admit the Pentateuch to be of God, all objections to any command of God therein, are by that very fact annulled. If you deny the credibility in this particular instance of the command to a father to sacrifice a son, being God's, I respond, the circumstances preceding that command prove it to my judgment to emanate absolutely from God, and from God alone. "It came to pass after these things," what things?—a series of Divine visions, appearances, and miracles, extended for the space of fifty years, through which Abraham had held personal communication with the

Angel of the Covenant, and had himself witnessed so many instances of a power above all nature exercised by Him, as to leave him no alternative than to believe that the Being who was thus manifesting Himself and his ways to him, was the Lord God of creation. Isaac himself was one of these many miracles. It seems, therefore, beyond the bounds of probability that Abraham should be either deceived in the source whence the command to slay his son issued, or, however severe the parental conflict, he should not exercise the same faith, in with his own hand recommitting the life of his son to God, as he had done in receiving him, contrary to all nature, from the hand of God. The firm belief that the same God, who, by his Almighty power, has given us this life, can and will by the same power restore that life, once, twice, a thousand times from death, or place it utterly above the reach of death, is part of the common faith of Abraham and ourselves—of our one Church. "The resurrection from the dead," faith in which was by this act of faith required from Abraham, in the sacrifice of his son, is, as you know, a standing article of the Church Catholic. It is the very *vis vitæ* of Christianity. "If the dead rise not," says St. Paul, "what profits it me to have fought with beasts?" It underlies the whole religion of responsibility—call it Christian or otherwise—to God in a future state. Now had this command been the first which had emanated from the Almighty to Abraham, I would concede nature might have justified his rejecting it as the suggestion of a power far different from that of the author of nature. But the preceding

experience of all his life since he quitted Babylon preserved him from error on this point. That which constitutes faith is the belief that there does exist, far above nature, a nature-creating, nature-controlling, nature-dissolving God, and that He addresses Himself to that part within us which in one sense is as superior to this material, inanimate system of nature, as He Himself, its author, is. Abraham had this faith. "He believed *God* as above nature;" this belief constituted both his righteousness, and his faithfulness of action. You, as an infidel, do not believe that there exists any power above nature able to give life to the dead. According to your infidelity, your son being dead, is dead forever. No power in or above nature can revivify him. Any power, therefore, celestial or otherwise, promising such an eventuality to you, and challenging you to test the truth of such promise, would from the very fact of your infidelity be regarded as a self-created delusion of your own senses. To my mind, Abraham's reason as well as faith was of a higher cast than yours. All the experience of his life was on the side of a personal, superintending Deity, to whom nature was nothing more than his own material pleasure. He had from Him received Isaac from the grave, for so far as nature was operant the womb of Sarah was as dead as the grave. If he committed him at his command to a second grave, the God who had once given, could give him again from death. On that faith he proceeded; that faith is the truth; there is such a God; nature and life are nothing but forms or phases of his will; if He reveals Himself to us, the acceptance

of such revelation places us on a rock higher than nature; it connects us with Himself. What we do in such faith is done as if it were done in the certainty that his omnipotence is ours. An Infidel, therefore, who has never been once in all his life in any communication with Deity, who has no faith in the existence of Deity, who considers the grave the "be-all and the end-all" of our present existence, is necessarily staggered at this proof in Abraham of his faith in God and his omnipotence. Knowing that Abraham could not mistake the voice of Jehovah, we Christians, on the other hand, deem it most reasonable both that God should have exacted this proof of his faith in one of the main articles of the Christian Creed, and that he should have been willing to prove the full sincerity of his faith in such article, though the death to be inflicted by his own hand was that of his only son in whom "his Seed was called." We believe the faith thus exercised by Abraham to be sanctioned by the soundest Reason. Let me or any other man only be certain that the command is that of the Almighty, given to me for purposes I am not called upon to comprehend, I or any reasonable being in Abraham's circumstances would act as Abraham did, and for the same reason which St. Paul assigns, "accounting that God was able to raise Isaac up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."[1] What is more dead than the dust from which we are originally created? We return to it; yet, like Abraham, we believe that the same omnipotence which created us from the first, can, and according to his

[1] Heb. xi. 19.

Word will, re-create us from the second dust—the dust of our own death and dissolution. What can be more consistent with the first instincts of the heart, or the first inferences of reason? There is thus no question between Christianity and Reason on this subject. Both admit that, if God so commanded, it was the highest reason in Abraham to obey without any reference whatever to consequences. Infidelity takes the ground that God did not, or could not, so command at all. Christianity shows that no other command than such would have been didactic to the Ancient Church of the radical truth which underlies the whole Gospel of salvation, and that obedience to it by Abraham completed and perfected the whole tenor of a life passed in communion with the Divine power which issued it. It would have been more marvellous for Abraham to have disobeyed than to have obeyed the Divine injunction. The faith of the resurrection he had; with such, in the mere abstract, God was not content: He tried it therefore in the deepest well of his earthly affections; yet so profound was his faith in the power of God, that, God commanding, he at once resigned his son to prove it. No reasonable man having such faith, and being placed beyond all doubt, as Abraham was, that the command proceeded from God, but would act as the Father of the Faithful did. I repeat, therefore, that in the case of the Isaacal sacrifice, reason is entirely in accordance with Christianity and in opposition to Infidelity.

Inf. Your argument, I think, still labors under this objection. Abraham believed the voice to be that of God; you now believe it because Abraham

then did; you thus build your faith not on a foundation of its own, but on Abraham's credence and credibility. This is what Newman characterizes as "faith at second hand;" not your own, but another's, at least, yours by adoption only.

Chr. Not so. Abraham's faith is mine, not by such imputation, but on distinct grounds, such as Abraham could not from the nature of things possess. That Abraham could not otherwise than know of a very truth the command to be of God, is proved to me by the whole tenor of his past life. He believed in the power of God in the resurrection to life from the dead. That faith in God was righteousness to him. He obeyed in that faith, the command to sacrifice Isaac; that obedience, as St. James states, made such faith perfect. I have the same faith, and it constitutes the same righteousness or medium of my acceptance by the Almighty as it did of his. Then, in addition, I have now evidence, which Abraham had not, that this voice was, as he believed, the voice of God.

Inf. How?

Chr. The fulfilment of the second or oral part of the prophecy delivered by the same Angel of the Covenant who commanded the sacrifice itself. Out of the crucifixion of Christ, from his dead body, the Church Catholic of all peoples, nations, and languages has been born. Its numbers are as the stars of heaven. It possesses the gate of our spiritual enemies, the powers of the keys to bind and loose from sin, Satan, and the world. Against it the gates of hell never have or can prevail. It was intended

to, and does, embrace all nations without exception in its preaching, responsibilities, and privileges. "Teach and baptize all nations." And it has thus become the blessing of the earth by the Almighty, through the death of his Son. Now that there is such a Church, that including its celestial and terrestrial members, it is in number as the sand of the sea-shore; that its Sacraments assume to bar hell and open heaven; that it dates its birth from the sacrifice of Christ on Mount Moriah; that it owns Him only as its Author, High-priest, Prophet, and Sovereign; that it comes and is by all the nations professing it, accepted as the blessing of Salvation to their souls, are facts of universal acknowledgment. I find all these facts promised in the prophecy by the same Being who commanded the sacrifice. What is the necessary conclusion of my intellect? The same as that of Abraham's faith—the Being who spoke to him was God. But I come to that conclusion, not on the same personal evidence as Abraham did, but on vaster grounds—grounds covering thirty centuries in time, and the extent of all Christendom in space. Abraham believed the command to be Divine from previous, I believe it to be so from subsequent, evidence. Supposing I reject its Divinity, the difficulty of explaining the identity of the Isaacal sacrifice with the crucifixion of Christ, and of the distinctive promises attached to it with the distinctive facts of the Church catholic, on any grounds short of omnipotence and omniscience in prescribing the one and realizing the other, is to my mind insuperable. The solution that it was God who commanded, who promised, who

has by the creation of the Christian Church verified the promises, is the only one which approves itself to my intellect. Neither the visual nor the oral part therefore of this typical prophecy was fulfilled before Hezekiah's day. Since his day the visual has been fulfilled in the crucifixion of our Lord; and the oral, already largely fulfilled, continues its course towards full verification in the gradual progress and acceptance of the religion of the Cross by "all the nations of the earth."

INF. Newman, you are aware, affirms that the Pentateuch was the production of a later age than the Mosaic.

CHR. He affirms so, it appears to me, repugnantly to all the evidence we have or can have on the subject. Even if this prophecy dates 800 and not 1500 years before Christ, it is not the less of divine inspiration, nor, except as such, is its fulfilment at all more explicable.

INF. That inference may, I think, be admitted: and that the effect also upon Abraham, Isaac, and the Church of that time, from the mysterious and appalling nature of the Ordeal, was more impressive than the mere word-reading of the whole Bible a hundred times over would be to us.

CHR. But this is only one of many prophecies which may be adduced in disproof and subversion of Newman's assertion. Let me take one other of quite another kind; such a one as the popular mind can easily understand and decide upon. We took the former from the first, we take this from the last Book—Deuteronomy—of the Pentateuch. The twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy contains, ac-

cording to our Faith, the prophecy of the future specific judgments of God on the Jewish nation in the event of their rejection of Jesus Christ "as the end of their Law and Prophets,"—as the Messiah of the Promises. As the language itself in which these denunciations are couched has scarcely a parallel in the whole circle of literature for plain sublimity of expression, I will not apologize for reading certain parts of it aloud:

"The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust. Thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: and thou shalt be removed into all kingdoms of the earth. Thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee. Thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway: so that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. And thou shalt eat of the fruit of thine own

body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and for tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, and toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates. And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other; and among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee: and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: in the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see."[1]

INF. Sublimity and simplicity combined, certainly. The grandeur, the massive Doric grandeur of the language of Scripture, I am the first to acknowledge; it has, I believe, very much to do with the hold its

[1] Deut. xxviii.

doctrines obtain over men's minds. But its substance may for all that be as pure fiction as that of other masterpieces of composition,—the poems of Homer, Virgil, Milton, or Shakspeare.

Chr. You must, I think, admit a distinction. Virgil and Shakspeare, for instance, wrote expressly with a view to beauty of composition in the putting forth of confessed fictions, avowed such by themselves—known to be such by their readers. No one perusing the Scriptures fails, on the contrary, to observe, that the whole stress in them is laid not on the language, but on the truths the language is intended to convey. It would be impossible, I think, for any impartial judicious critic to point out in the whole volume of the Scriptures one attempt at what we call "fine writing." The Book of Isaiah is, perhaps, the highest composition the world possesses in magnificence of both ideas and language. Yet it would be hard to find a verse in it in which the language is not entirely subordinated to the truth designed to be expressed. Take the most elaborate compositionist in this century,—Macaulay, the historian. Some of his pages contain a remarkable union of distinct excellences of style; but the impression produced on our minds in reading such language is, in kind, entirely different from that which the Scriptures compel us to feel in reading their language. In one sense, that of comparison with the magnitude of the truths revealed in it, the language of Scripture is felt by us to be considered by the Scriptures themselves as nothing. In another sense, that of being such language as absolutely

forces us, from the humblest parable to the highest soarings of prophecy, to be conscious of this intention, infers to my mind more than human wisdom. Setting aside the question as to whether every single word is inspired, it might, I think, be without difficulty established, that the ordering of the whole tone and style of the language of the Scripture, is no less of God than are the truths of which such language is the medium of communication to our souls. There is another point also observable: you would, though an infidel, be startled and shocked at finding a jest in either words, intention, or act, in the Scriptures, would you not?

INF. Certainly.

CHR. But why should you?

INF. It is contrary to all our ideas of the character of the Scriptures.

CHR. Whence came those ideas of such character?

INF. From the Scriptures themselves. There is not a jest in them: the world knows it; the knowledge grows up and forms part of our nature. If I then really chanced to meet lightness of words or verbal abuse in them, such nature would of necessity be much, and, if I were a Christian, would be painfully surprised.

CHR. Here then is a whole literature extending through fifteen centuries, and of course through many successive generations of writers of different eras, circumstances, condition, erudition, habits, and feelings, standing alone in this respect, that from its first to its last page there is an utter abhorrence from all "foolish jesting," facetiousness, derisiveness,

levity, or frivolity of either thought or expression. An uniform, uninterrupted gravity of diction, an undeviating solemnity of thought, an unswerving tenor of most impressive seriousness marks them as apart and distinct from any other literature the world has produced. This, I say, is of God, not of man. We Christians explain it in a simple, easy way, carrying complete conviction to our intellects. The books which make up Scripture were each and all written by the inspiration of one and the same Holy Spirit; therefore, their tone is throughout one and the same—most grave, earnest, serious, and truthful; the voice of the Spirit of God speaking in human language to the souls of men on the things pertaining to the salvation of those souls, and their indissoluble connection with the kingdoms of eternity. But how do you explain it?

Inf. The very subject-matter of them would create such solemnity of diction.

Chr. How so?—what subject-matter?

Inf. That of the connection which exists between the souls of men and an eternal futurity. As Milton's solemn subject compelled a solemn style, so the solemn matter of the Scriptures admits no other than a correspondent diction. Every successive writer of the Scriptures, having the same solemn truths to propound, must of necessity use, in their delivery, similar solemnity of language; and thus resulted the uninterrupted gravity of your Scriptural literature from its origin to its close of fifteen centuries.

Chr. This reply is fatal to your infidelity; it takes for granted the truth Christians advance, that a suc-

cession of men were raised up on purpose to reveal and propound these Divine truths to mankind. You say their language was necessarily in unison with the solemnity of their revelations. I do not see the "necessity" of it, unless you come with us still further, and admit the language as well as the matter to have been prescribed by one and the same Holy Spirit. There would then be, as we hold, a necessary correspondence. But claiming the necessity of the respondence, you even thus admit the Divine succession of prophets and of prophecy. You cannot get over the difficulty of accounting for this uniform solemnity in the use of language by the Scriptures otherwise than by taking it for granted that a succession of men were really raised up to perpetuate the revelation of the same uniform truths; the uniformity of the matter necessitating uniformity of diction in all of them from Moses to St. John. This, I apprehend, is imperfect Christianity, not infidelity. If you concede the divinity of the matter of Scripture or the Divine succession of the prophets and apostles who in Hebrew and Greek delivered it, the divinity of the language would rather be a question between me as an orthodox and you as a heterodox Christian, than between us as Christian and infidel. If you cannot, as an infidel, surmount the fact of the language of Scripture being from Genesis to Revelation in one unchanging character otherwise than by becoming half Christian, I am not on the present occasion called upon to meet you in this new aspect of yourself. But this is episodical: let us revert to the Pentateuchal prophecy I just in part read to

you. Newman's position is, that unless it was fulfilled before the days of Hezekiah, it has never been fulfilled since. His words are, "No prophecy of the Pentateuch can be proved to have been fulfilled which had not been already fulfilled before Hezekiah's day."[1]

Inf. He holds the Pentateuch to be a composition of Hezekiah's age, and therefore, in its Mosaic character, spurious or a forgery.

Chr. We will first prove this Pentateuchal prophecy not to have been fulfilled before Hezekiah's day. An enumeration of the specific judgments denounced in it, compared with the specific facts of Jewish history before Hezekiah's period, will decide this point at the cost of little research. Before Hezekiah's century the land of Judæa had not become powder and dust, nor did it so become till very many centuries after his time. Nor before his century were the "whole nation of the Jews only oppressed and crushed alway." Nor had they become a proverb and a by-word among all nations; nor a sign and a wonder forever. Nor had any nation from the ends of the earth, whose emblem was the eagle, whose language was unintelligible to the Jews, besieged them in all their gates through all their land. Nor had any such catastrophe as the siege of the whole compressed nation in Jerusalem by the nation of the eagle, of the fierce countenance, the iron heart, and alien tongue ever taken place. Nor had they ever been scattered among all people from one end of the earth to the other. Nor had they ever been, nor were they then, wanderers under a

[1] Phases of Faith, p. 113.

"wonderful plague of long continuance," without home, ease, or rest, among all people. For generations subsequent to Hezekiah's age, the Jews remained in possession of Judæa; their land retained its fertility; they continued the peculiar people; their heavens were not made brass, nor their land iron; their patria, ritual, and temple continued their own; their high and fenced walls did not come down; no such siege, with its collateral effects, happened to them in any one place in their collective capacity as a nation; nor any such universal infliction of misery and contempt as is particularized in the prophecy. These facts are as notorious as any we can quote from any history of any nation. Whatever political or religious calamities the Jews underwent before or in Hezekiah's reign, none of them can be forced into assimilations with the promineut features of this prophecy.

Inf. History compels me so far to concur. But the question here is, Has this prophecy been fulfilled since Hezekiah's reign? Newman emphatically denies it, his words being," No prophecy of the Pentateuch can be proved to have been fulfilled, which had not already been fulfilled before Hezekiah's day." Admitting it was never fulfilled before, can you refute his position that it has never been fulfilled since his reign? "It is a vain attempt," he adds, "to forge polemical weapons out of these old prophets for the service of modern creeds."[1]

Chr. Infidelity is most confident in the making of infidel assertions: the value of them we shall, as we

[1] Phases of Faith, p. 113.

proceed, put to the proof. You have travelled in Palestine? thousands in these days do so. Is not Palestine the land the Jews once inhabited?

Inf. Beyond doubt.

Chr. What is the present soil of that land between, for instance, Jerusalem and the Mediterranean? Can it be more truly described than that its rain is powder and dust? A man, as you well know, may travel there fifty miles without seeing fifty blades of green grass on his journey. One of the rainy seasons of Judæa has now for many centuries been entirely suspended; and, as a consequence, "the heaven overhead has long since become brass, and the ground underfoot as the bare iron." The soil has been dried to dust, and the winds have swept this dust, century after century, into the sea, leaving nothing but the aridity of the sand and the sterility of the rock behind. This Palestine was once the land of "fountains and flowers, of the former and the latter rain, of the vine, the palm, the cedar, the olive, and the fig tree, of milk and honey, of kine and corn." The term, "the glory of all lands," applied to it, was no exaggeration. Let us refer to any one who has passed through it, or consult any trustworthy work of travels on the subject, the words, "the heaven of Palestine is brass, the ground iron, the rain thereof powder and dust, Jerusalem a desolation," will sum up in one sentence all the descriptions they give us of the country and its aspect.

Inf. But other countries have in their physical features undergone as extraordinary deteriorations as Palestine.

Chr. Has England? or France? or Germany? or Spain? or Portugal?

Inf. I do not allude to modern countries.

Chr. As countries these are not modern, they are as old as Palestine; even as states they may claim a respectable antiquity. Eighteen hundred years affords great scope for changes in nature as well as in politics. But of none of these is the soil or climate deteriorated; probably in every one of them it is improved; or, again, has such a deterioration occurred in India, Algiers, Tunis, Morocco, Asia Minor, Macedonia, the Mediterranean Isles, Italy, Greece?

Inf. A deplorable change for the worse has taken place in all the countries you have named which are under the Mohammedan rule.

Chr. Undoubtedly, but not in the soil, the seasons, the climates, the fountains, the atmosphere. However disastrous Islamite barbarism has been to the arts, sciences, civilization, and humanity of the countries under its sway, nature itself in those we have mentioned remains the same. It has not remained the same in Palestine.

Inf. But surely some other countries must in three thousand years have experienced changes similar in character to those which have occurred in Palestine.

Chr. There are other countries.

Inf. Then what becomes of the force of this argument for the fulfilment of Prophecy?

Chr. The force is infinitely increased and multiplied by the fact that every one of these countries, and these countries alone, are subjects of the very same Word of prophecy which has passed upon

Palestine. Such are under the same category as Palestine, all laboring under effects produced by a power above nature, but none experiencing to the same degree the severity of that power.

Inf. And you account for it by prophecy?

Chr. I do; thus—the God from whom proceeded these emanations of omniscience which we call prophecy is He by whose will and pleasure alone, Nature is Nature. Whether He acts through nature, without nature, or through new creations in nature, matters, in result and effect, nothing. He is the cause, and his the action. "The rain of thy land shall be powder and dust," that was the word which proceeded from Him more than three thousand years since upon Palestine. Palestine has become powder and dust. *How*, matters not—perhaps by his acting in and through nature: perhaps by his changing, reversing, and revolutionizing, nature; perhaps by his making that to be nature which previously had neither existence nor imaginability.

Inf. Do you believe, then, that God is constantly calling new existences forth?

Chr. I do. He is not only an eternal but sempiternal God; not only a creator to and from eternity, but ever-creating in that eternity.

Inf. I can understand that He may be sempiternal in the sense of ever evolving new forms and systems from nature and matter, but not in the sense of ever-creating existences out of mere nihility or nothingness.

Chr. You stop short then of where I do. But be that as it may, the powers of creation being entirely

under his control, the direction of them to any purpose He pleases, must on either supposition be conceded. All Nature in this sense is but the Medium of God.

Inf. There, in one sentence, you define my whole faith and religion.

Chr. Indeed!

Inf. I believe there is an Almighty God. I believe nature to be the medium between Him and ourselves, the only medium: in and through that medium alone is He to be found by us; the study of nature is the study of God, therefore the only true religion; all others are imaginary. I hold the Works, and not any Word of God to be to us the only true medium of Himself and his will. Nature indeed is God.

Chr. We shall soon come to analyze your proposition and see what it is worth. Has God then through nature, or Nature without a God, so changed as we have described the physical aspect of Palestine?

Inf. Nature without a God? No, I cannot say so, except by denying my own position that Nature is the medium of God.

Chr. Without ceasing to be, that is, a Deist, and becoming an Atheist; well, then, God through the medium of Nature?

Inf. The admission would accord with my ideas, but how does it with yours? For prophecy and miracle infer a supernatural interference with Nature, do they not?

Chr. By no means necessarily so: It matters not,

as I premised, whether God acts by or without nature. To put the proposition with logical accuracy, "Whatever it pleases God to act materially by, that becomes nature;" in this sense God is ever summoning new existences into creation.

INF. Not in this world.

CHR. According to the Christian faith, yes. Christianity teaches that there is at this instant going on a process of God in the creation, by purely arbitrary means of His own, of new natures in us and the world at large.

INF. But not of new existences.

CHR. Yes, of new existences, not yet completed, but commenced and still proceeding—the consummation of which is reserved, or passes on to a new physical creation of heaven and earth to synchronize with the manifestation of these new natures: they are each to keep time and place with each other. Whether God, therefore, in Palestine used physical nature as it was, or created other means which thus became nature, affects not the essence of the question. The fact is before us. How came it a fact? By the agency of nature?

INF. Well!

CHR. And Nature is, you say, the medium of God; then what Nature has done in Palestine, God Himself has done through Nature. Is that clear?

INF. Proceed.

CHR. But precisely that which has been thus done through nature, was, if not fifteen, at least, by Newman's own theory, eight centuries before the dispersion of the Jewish nation pre-menaced and pre-par-

ticularized in spoken and written words. Now does Nature, the inanimate medium of God, use speech or words? Does it write or deliver the writing?

INF. No.

CHR. Then though it may act, it cannot, any more than the sun, the moon, the wind, the ground, the waters, the forest, or the cloud, tell us beforehand, in speech or writing, *what* it will act?

INF. It cannot.

CHR. Here are certain effects produced in Palestine. Giant Nature produces them; still here also, centuries before Nature has carried them out, are these very effects definitely specified in words and writing, as to take place in the event of a certain line of conduct being pursued by the Jewish people in this very land of Palestine. Did Nature write or speak those words?

INF. How could it?

CHR. Who did then?

INF. Men wrote and spoke them.

CHR. How came men to write and speak them? Man, simply as man, possesses no insight into futurity. Nature has effected this change in Palestine. I concede, you observe, your postulate here. How came it, fifteen centuries before, to be written and spoken, that this was the very thing which Nature should do, and do exceptionally as a "sign and a wonder." Let Infidelity explain this. It requires explanation, for Nature cannot speak or write; man cannot see centuries onward, much less calculate on any possible exception in this or that country to the

general laws of Nature, least of all from the excess of verdure and fertility to "powder and dust."

INF. Your question is a perplexing one.

CHR. Consider: man speaks and writes, does he not?

INF. Yes.

CHR. Mere material nature, the nature by which such changes have been effected in Palestine, neither reads nor writes. From whom does man derive his capacities?

INF. From God.

CHR. As he derives from God the capacity to speak and write at all, it is possible that he may also be caused of God to use that capacity in speaking and writing thus and thus.

INF. It is possible.

CHR. Nature being the medium of God, God can always regulate and command it?

INF. Admitted.

CHR. Has nature consciousness?

INF. Of course not.

CHR. Unconscious nature effects in one particular country what man fifteen hundred years before had predicted she would in that particular country, exceptionally to all her laws, effect. He who always regulates and commands nature is God. What is the direct inference?

INF. I see your conclusion. God revealed; man spoke and wrote; in due time, Nature, God's medium of action, fulfils God's revelation so spoken and so written.

CHR. Can you explain, I do not say the theory but

the hard, substantial facts of this and many other specific prophecies, in any other possibly rational way? Let us again revert to the prophecy itself. Can you mention any nation which was a nation and a race, both one and the other, then—be it in Moses or Hezekiah's time—and is a nation and a race now,—a space of at least two thousand five hundred years,—as now scattered among all people, from one end of the earth unto the other, yet as distinct among the nations when thus scattered as they were when taken out and selected from all nations and placed by themselves in one land? Supposing you never to have heard of the existence of the Scriptures, or to have read a word of prophecy, what name would instantly rise to the tip of your tongue in replying to such a question?

Inf. The Jews.

Chr. Again. What nation, after being stormed in all the strongholds successively of its own land, was then cooped up and concentred in one city in a siege the straitness of which compelled mothers to eat their own children, by a nation whose emblem was the Eagle, of a fierce countenance, regarding neither the person of the old, nor showing favor to the young?

Inf. You mean, of course, the Romans: but the Romans conquered a hundred nations besides the Jews.

Chr. Not one in this way.

Inf. Carthage.

Chr. Rome in her wars with Carthage was an Italian state, separated from Carthage by merely the breadth of the Mediterranean; Carthage was not a

"land," but a commercial Venice. Carthage had no strongholds throughout all her lands; Carthage was defended by mercenaries and not a race; in brief, the Phœnician race and people of Carthage have for two thousand years been utterly extinct. So far from being scattered among all nations, not a Carthaginian pretending to identity of any description with those who fell before Rome, could, if we instituted the minutest search, be discovered from one end of the earth to the other. If we examine the catalogue of the Roman Provinces—Spain, Portugal, France, Britain, the Rhine frontiers, the Cisalpine, the Danubian States, Northern Africa, Anatolia, Egypt, and the Euphratic Provinces, in the conquest or national catastrophe of none of them do we find the following distinctive "signs:"

A land of one race—A land studded with fortresses of "high and fenced walls," manned by that race, into which they had thrown themselves, and in which they trusted, all of which are in succession beleaguered and stormed by the enemy—A siege of unparalleled, of the most appalling severity, of the whole race in one spot—A "plucking off" of the race from the land—A depopulation from being as "the stars in heaven for multitude," to being "a few"—A scattering of these few from one end of the earth to the other—Centuries of "a trembling heart, of failing eyes, of sorrow of mind, of the restless foot, of being only oppressed and crushed alway." Yet though "few," and "scattered" and "crushed alway," never destroyed, or dying out, or amalgamated with any of the nations among whom they are

scattered. But remaining always an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, in every age and country of their dispersion. No series of events in the history of any other nation with whom Rome came into collision bears even a remote parallel to the "signs" here laid down as the destinies of the Jewish people on their rejection of the Messiah. But applying to no other race or nation whatever, they do most strikingly apply to the Jews.

For the Jews were one race—Palestine, their land, was the land of one race—Palestine under the Romans, as under the Canaanites, was studded with cities of "gates and high and fenced walls"—Into these cities the race in their national rising against the Roman supremacy threw themselves, "they trusted in them"—One by one these cities were stormed with a mercilessness that spared neither youth nor age. The race fell back, as one body, into Jerusalem—The Roman eagles followed, and Jerusalem became the "carcass of the nation"—In the course of the siege, each terrible detail of the prophetic denunciation was amply and notoriously verified—Jerusalem was stormed, and 1,100,000 of the race perished at one blow. The race was "plucked out" from the land, every individual of it being prohibited, under penalty of death, from coming even in sight of their once "holy and beautiful city." Do you admit the truth of these historical statements?

INF. They are too well known to be contravened.

CHR. How many centuries have since elapsed?

INF. Eighteen.

CHR. Throughout these eighteen centuries is there

any race which has combined in itself and destinies these "signs" or characteristics: 1. Few in number. 2. Scattered from one end of the earth to the other. 3. Never resting, or living in any one country as their patria or home. 4. Oppressed and crushed alway under "a plague of long continuance." 5. Being "an astonishment and a proverb among all nations," climates, religions, and languages, Christian and Heathen, without distinction; alike among those who know, and those who have never heard of the Scriptures. Suppose me to ask this question of ninety-nine out of a hundred people in any part of the world, what would be the certain reply?

INF. I do not contend against patent facts—the Jews.

CHR. Suppose me again to ask, "Do any other people besides the Jews unite these characteristics?" would one in a hundred find it possible to suggest even the supposition of any other?

INF. Proceed.

CHR. We have, then, in connection with the history of a certain race a certain number of facts extending over so many centuries. Fifteen, or, as Newman avers, eight centuries before the starting point of these facts, we have each of them, not vaguely and generally, but definitely and specifically written down as part of a great whole,—call it judgment, destiny, or what you please,—denounced as certain to befall the Jewish race in the event of their rejecting a Messiah calling himself by the "glorious and fearful name of the Lord thy God." To the Jewish race alone were these addressed; given and

consigned as part of what the race itself have ever, from the moment of their delivery, regarded as the Oracles of God. Without Scripture or Prophecy the whole world, Christian and Heathen alike, going by the palpable, universal facts before their eyes, put their finger on the Jews as the only race in which such and such signs are realized and combined. Without consulting the after facts of history, we, at the same time, put our finger on certain writings which, fifteen centuries before these facts commenced, specify the facts, the signs, the contingency, and the race. These writings name the Jews as the race in whom certain "signs" were to be fulfilled. Three thousand years after they are written the whole world witnesses that in the Jews, and of all nations the Jews only, these signs are so strangely and prominently fulfilled, that by them the Jew is distinguished from any other nation of the world. The "signs" predicted are literally the "signs" by which the Jew is known to be of that race the whole world over. The "signs" cannot be separated from the Jew, nor the Jew from the "signs."

Inf. It is certainly very singular.

Chr. Now, did Nature predict all this in writing? were these writings from Nature?

Inf. No.

Chr. Something or some being did predict them thus in writing. Explain who or what.

Inf. It is not easy to explain such very strong coincidences between present facts and these ancient vaticinations.

Chr. How! not explain a broad, outstanding,

pyramidic fact of history? You, who insist that a Christian should explain every thing from the highest mystery to the humblest precept in his religion, not able to explain a fact which confronts infidelity and false philosophies—the philosophies that believe Nature to be God—in every century of time and every country of the globe! Not explain a Jew! You can and do explain the Assyrian, the Egyptian, the Greek, the Roman, the German, the Briton; why not explain the most striking, the most durable, the most arresting of them all—the Jew? In Homer, in Livy, in Gildas, in Bede, you find not one syllable predictive of the destinies of the Greek, the Roman, the Briton, or the Teuton,—all great and powerful nations,—three thousand years after the date of their compositions. But in these Scriptures, written three thousand years ago, is described the history of the Jews as they are before our eyes at this moment; so described in deep, unmistakable characteristics, that it is easier by them to detect a Jew than it is by any other signs to detect an individual of any other race in the world. What baffles infidelity here? Not surely lack of materials. There is ancient, here is modern Palestine; there are the pre-dispersion writings, here are the post-dispersion facts. Throw aside the Scriptures altogether; proceed on Greek, Roman European authorities, by the world, by the popular, the universal voice from England to Japan, and explain the Jew. Why, for instance, are they a "proverb" in every one's mouth? Why, after eighteen centuries, during which, according to the science of the Malthusian Economy, they ought to have peopled

every land of their sojourning, are they still but "few" in number? Why do they still remain "scattered?" What cause, when union is strength, has prevented them from uniting their scatterings? What has barred them from Palestine, yet barring them, still keeps them also "Jews?" Why, for so many centuries, by Roman, by barbarian, by Christian, by Islamite, by Pagan, have they been "oppressed and crushed alway," and, being so, why different from every oppressed nation, instead of, at times, attempting to vindicate their exemption from the "wonderful plague of long continuance," have they, since the crucifixion, ever been, under Pagan, Christian, and Islamite, the race of "the trembling heart;" they whose history, before "their rejection of the great and glorious Name," teems with heroes, compared to whom the warriors of Greece and Rome were children in prowess and mercenaries in spirit? How is it when, even now, in our own England, a few Jews emerge from the mass, the mass itself remains a "hissing and a scorn" unto the nations? Has Infidelity no explanation for this phenomenon which has already lasted eighteen centuries?

Inf. I have never met a satisfactory explanation of all these facts: some, I think, may be accounted for on political, others on reactionary grounds; but I admit much would yet remain beyond my present power of solution.

Chr. Add, the only visible Being in their history who ever presumed to appropriate to Himself "the glorious and fearful Name of the Lord thy God," was for that very reason crucified by them; yet Him

they are compelled to see acknowledged by an ever-widening Church of all peoples and languages as the "only name given to man whereby he can be saved." Wherever they wander—the Crucified still confronts them; in every nation where they appear, they are doomed to look, in some aspect or other, "on Him whom they pierced;" and this very Crucifixion was to be, as their writings declare, the cardinal point or hinge on which, for good or evil, were to turn their temporal and spiritual destinies as a nation. If you questioned me why I could not be an Infidel, I would point to the first Jew I met and say, "That man's history makes it too hazardous."

INF. I feel perplexed but not alarmed by my inability to satisfy myself as to the causes which isolate the Jews from all nations.

CHR. We Christians, on the other hand, feel that our souls cannot afford to dispense with a decision in this matter. Here is a Power which has absolutely controlled both material and human nature—a land and a race—for eighteen hundred years, in complete accordance with certain Scriptures which this very race have from the first constantly maintained to have been delivered by this Power fifteen hundred years previously to their legislator and Church. But everywhere these Scriptures address themselves also to us, and that with promises and menaces equal, at least, in their solemn import to those addressed of old to the Jews. Now, if I cannot explain the peculiar history of Palestine and of the Jews otherwise than by admitting the conclusion which that history logically forces upon me,—the Divine inspiration of the

Pentateuch,—I should be doing violence to my judgment and intellect in remaining a Skeptic instead of becoming a Christian. On the lowest grounds of self-consideration I am not prepared, by refusing credence to his Word, to enter into conflict with a Being, if not of almighty, certainly of such power as Nature at present cannot cope withal. Here is the evidence of three thousand years that she cannot. Had I no other case, therefore, than this, of the written judicial sentence thus executed on the Jews, submitted to my reason, I should feel it far too unsafe to be an Infidel; for here is irrefragable proof that disobedience to the requisitions or revealed commands of this Power cannot be perpetrated with impunity. But knowing this to be only one of very many instances of the irresistibility of this Power, I am compelled to infer the infidelity which ignores its very existence to be in the highest degree irrational as well as dangerous. Observe also that in the same page[1] Newman writes, "Of the prophecies which concern various nations, some of them are remarkably verified." This admission alone overthrows Infidelity in the gross. The power of prophecy, and the fact of many prophecies on a national scale fulfilled being thus conceded, the Infidel abandons the principle, retaining only the profession of Ifindelity. This is again irrational. I am thus, so far as the exercise of Intellect is concerned, left no other alternative than, even on the ground of the Pentateuchal prophecies alone, to accept the Divine original of both the Scriptures and the Christian

[1] Phases of Faith, p. 115.

faith. "The polemical weapons, therefore, forged out of the Old Prophets" for the service of our Christian Creed still remain, contrary to Newman's assertion, armor too potent for infidelity to encounter in the lists of right reason. In attempting it, Infidelity, with regard to some prophecies, ceases to be infidelity, and with regard to others, confesses it has no solution to propose of facts it finds impossible to deny. May we not be excused in deeming such Infidelity Imbecility?

But you may be more successful in your next objection.

INF. I will leave the Pentateuch, then, and proceed to the Psalms. The statement of Newman is, "As to the Messianic prophecies, I began to be pressed with the difficulty of proving against the Jews that 'Messiah was to suffer.' The Psalms generally adduced for this purpose can in no way be fixed on Messiah."[1] Now, the Saviour in whom you believe is a Crucified Saviour, "Jesus Christ and Him Crucified." The great emblem of your religion is the instrument of his suffering—the Cross: it surmounts your material churches, and is inscribed in baptism on the brow of every member of your spiritual Church: but this statement alleges that the Psalms in no way indicate a suffering Messiah. If this be correct, the connection between the Psalms and the Crucified Saviour whom you worship must be entirely imaginary; they form, in fact, neither part of your Scriptures, nor evidence of the truth of your religion.

[1] Phases of Faith, p. 113.

Chr. Against Newman's assertion I place that judgment of the Christian Church which regards the whole Book of Psalms as one great Precal Prophecy of the Messiah; a Messiah both Suffering and Triumphant. I shall, I fear, weary you if I attempt to read consecutively out of these spiritual songs of the Church those passages which refer to Jesus Christ in either his capacity as the great sacrifice for sin, Himself made the curse for us, and, as such, bearing the sins of the whole world in his own body, or as the Triumphant Conqueror, by the consummation of such sacrifice, of death, the grave, and hell.

Inf. They cannot, I think, from this statement of Newman's, be so many as you anticipate.

Chr. I must beg your patience, then, while I cite such of them as will enable your judgment to form its own conclusion.

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed."[1] "My heart was glad and my glory rejoiced; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For why? Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell, neither shalt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption, thou shalt show me the path of life: in thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore."[2] "Keep me as an apple of an eye. Hide me under the shadow of thy wings, from the ungodly that trouble me. Mine enemies compass me round about to take away my soul. Defend my soul from the ungodly

[1] Ps. ii. [2] Ps. xvi.

which is a sword of thine; from the men of thy hand and from the evil world. I will behold thy presence in righteousness: and when I wake up after thy likeness I shall be satisfied with it."[1] "They pierced my hands and my feet; I may tell all my bones: they stand staring and looking upon me. They part my garments among them: and cast lots upon my vesture. All the ends of the world shall remember themselves and be turned unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him. All they that go down into the dust shall kneel before him; and no man hath quickened his own soul. My seed shall serve him: they shall be counted unto the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and the heavens shall declare his righteousness: unto a people that shall be born, whom the Lord hath made."[2] "Though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou hast anointed my head with oil; thy loving-kindness and thy mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."[3] "Into thy hands I commend my spirit: I am become like as a broken vessel. I have heard the blasphemy of the multitude: and fear is on every side, whilst they conspire together against me, and take their counsel to take away my life. But my hope hath been in thee, O God: I have said, Thou art my God. Thou hast shown me marvellous great kindness in a great city."[4] "The Lord bringeth the

[1] Ps. xvii. [2] Ps. xxii. [3] Ps. xxiii. [4] Ps. xxxi.

counsel of the heathen to naught: and maketh the devices of the people to be of none effect, and casteth out the counsels of princes. The counsel of the Lord shall endure forever, and the thoughts of his heart from generation to generation."[1] "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. Great are the troubles of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of all. He keepeth all his bones; so that none of them is broken."[2] "Plead thou my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me: say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. Let them be as the dust before the wind: and the angel of the Lord scattering them. False witnesses did rise up: they laid to my charge things that I knew not. They rewarded me evil for good. They gaped upon me with their mouths; avenge thou my cause, my God, and my Lord. Blessed be the Lord, who hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant."[3] "I waited patiently for the Lord: and he inclined unto me, and heard my calling. He brought me also out of the horrible pit, and set my feet upon the rock. He hath put a new song into my mouth: even a thanksgiving unto our God. Great are the wondrous works which thou hast done. Sacrifice and meat-offering, thou wouldest not: but mine ears hast thou opened. Burnt-offerings, and offerings for sin, hast thou not required: then said I, Lo, I come. In the volume of thy book it is written of me, that I should fulfil thy will, O God: I am content to do it."[4] "All mine enemies whisper

[1] Ps. xxxiii. [2] Ps. xxxiv. [3] Ps. xxxv. [4] Ps. xl.

together against me: even against me do they imagine this evil. Let the sentence of guiltiness proceed against him: and now that he lieth, let him rise up no more. Yea, even mine own familiar friend, whom I trusted: who did also eat of my bread, hath laid great wait for me. But be thou merciful unto me, O Lord: raise thou me up again, and I shall reward them. Thou shalt set me before thy face forever."[1] "Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks: so longeth my soul after Thee, O Lord. My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God: when shall I come to appear before the presence of God? My tears have been my meat day and night: while they daily say unto me, Where is now thy God? My God, my soul is vexed within me: all thy waves and storms are gone over me. I will say unto the Lord of my strength, Why hast thou forgotten me? My bones are smitten asunder as with a sword: whilst my enemies that trouble me cast me in the teeth. Why art thou so vexed, O my soul: and why art thou so disquieted within me? O put thy trust in God: for I will yet thank him, which is the help of my countenance, and my God."[2] "Save me, O God, for thy name's sake, and deliver me in thy strength. For strangers are risen up against me: and tyrants, which have not God before their eyes, seek after my soul."[3] "Hear my prayer, O Lord: and hide not thyself from my petition. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me: and a horrible dread hath overwhelmed me. It is not

[1] Ps. xli. [2] Ps. xlii. [3] Ps. liv.

an open enemy that hath done me this dishonor, neither was it mine adversary that did magnify himself against me: but it was even thou, my companion, my guide, and mine own familiar friend. We took sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God as friends. He laid his hands upon such as be at peace with him, and he brake his covenant. The words of his mouth were softer than butter, having war in his heart: his words were smoother than oil, and yet be they very swords."[1] "Be merciful unto me, O God, for man goeth about to devour me. They daily mistake my words: all that they imagine is to do me evil: they hold all together and keep themselves close, and mark my steps, when they lie in wait for my soul. In God have I put my trust, I will not fear what man can do unto me. Thou hast delivered my soul from death, and my feet from falling: that I may walk before God in the light of the living."[2] "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my soul trusteth in thee. My soul is among lions. I lie among the children of men, that are set on fire: whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the people: and I will sing unto thee among the nations. For the greatness of thy mercy reacheth unto the heavens: and thy truth unto the clouds."[3] "Deliver me from mine enemies, O God: defend me from them that rise up against me. O deliver me from the wicked doers, and save me from the blood-

[1] Ps. lv. [2] Ps. lvi. [3] Ps. lvii.

thirsty men. For lo, they lie waiting for my soul: slay them not, lest my people forget it: but scatter them abroad among the people. I will sing of thy power, for thou hast been my refuge and defence in the day of my trouble."[1] "Hear my prayer, O God, give ear unto my prayer. Thou, O Lord, hast heard my desires: and hast given an heritage to them that fear thy name. Thou shalt grant the king a long life: that his years may endure throughout all generations. He shall dwell before God forever."[2] "My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh also longeth after thee: in a barren and dry land where no water is. Under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. My soul hangeth on thee: thy right hand hath upholden me. They that seek the hurt of my soul shall go under the earth."[3] "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in, even unto my soul. They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head: they that are mine enemies, and would destroy me guiltless, are mighty. For thy sake have I suffered reproof: shame hath covered my face. I am become a stranger unto my brethren: even an alien unto my mother's children. For the zeal of thine house hath even eaten me up: and the rebukes of them that rebuked thee have fallen upon me. Hear me, O Lord, in the multitude of thy mercy: even in the truth of thy salvation. Let not the water-flood drown me, neither let the deep swallow me up: and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me. Thy rebuke hath broken my heart: I am full of heaviness: I looked

[1] Ps. lix. [2] Ps. lxi. [3] Ps. lxiii.

for some to have pity on me, but there was no man, neither found I any to comfort me. They gave me gall to eat: and when I was thirsty they gave me vinegar to drink. Let the things that should have been for their wealth be unto them an occasion for falling. Let their eyes be blinded, that they see not: and ever bow thou down their backs. Let their habitation be void: and let no man dwell in their tents, for they persecute him whom thou hast smitten."[1] "When I receive the congregation, I shall judge according to right. The earth is weak and all the inhabitants thereof: I bear up the pillars of it. All the horns of the ungodly also will I break: and the horns of the righteous shall be exalted."[2] "Bow down thine ear, O Lord, and hear me. Preserve thou my soul, for I am holy. Great is thy mercy towards me: thou hast delivered my soul from the nethermost hell. Give thy strength unto thy servant, and help the son of thy handmaid."[3] "O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night unto thee, for my soul is full of trouble: and my life draweth nigh unto hell. Free among the dead, like unto them that are wounded, and lie in the grave: thou hast laid me in the lowest pit: in a place of darkness, and in the deep. Thine indignation lieth hard upon me, and thou hast vexed me with all thy storms. I am so fast in prison, that I cannot get forth. Dost thou show wonders among the dead; or shall the dead rise up again and praise thee? Shall thy loving-kindness be showed in the

[1] Ps. lxix. [2] Ps. lxxv. [3] Ps. lxxxvi.

grave, or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wondrous works be known in the dark, and thy righteousness in the land where all things are forgot? Unto thee, O Lord, have I cried, and early shall my prayer come before thee."[1] "Thou spakest sometimes in visions to thy saints and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty, I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him. My truth and my mercy shall be with him. I will set his dominion also in the sea, and his right hand in the floods. He shall call me, Thou art my father: my God, and my strong salvation. And I will make him, my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth. His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the day of heaven. But thou hast abhorred and forsaken thine Anointed: thou hast put out his glory, and cast his throne down to the ground: the days of his youth hast thou shortened, and covered his face with dishonor. Remember, Lord, how I do bear in my bosom the rebukes of many people: whilst thine enemies have blasphemed thee and slandered the footsteps of thine Anointed."[2] "Hear my prayer, O Lord: O hear me, and that right soon. Mine enemies revile me all day long: and they that are mad upon me are sworn together against me. For I have eaten ashes as it were bread: and mingled my drink with weeping, and that because of thine indignation and wrath: for thou hast taken me up, and cast me down. He brought

[1] Ps. lxxxviii. [2] Ps. lxxxix.

me down in my journey: and shortened my days. Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure. Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."[1] "Hold not thy tongue, O God of my praise: for the mouth of the ungodly is open upon me: they compassed me about with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause. For the love I had unto them, lo, they take now my contrary part: but I give myself unto prayer. Thus have they rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my good-will. But deal thou with me according to thy name. O deliver me, for I am poor and helpless, and my heart is wounded within me. I go hence like the shadow that departeth, and am driven away as the grasshopper. I became also a reproach unto them: they that looked upon me shaked their heads. Help me, O Lord my God: O save me according to thy mercy: and they shall know, how that this is thy hand, and that thou, Lord, hast done it. Though they curse, yet bless thou."[2] "The Lord said unto my Lord: Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord sware, and will not repent. Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. The Lord upon thy right hand shall wound even kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head."[3] "The Lord is on my side: I will not fear what man can do

[1] Ps. cii. [2] Ps. cix. [3] Ps. cx.

unto me. All nations compassed me round, but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them. The Lord is my strength and my song, and is become my salvation. Open me the gates of righteousness: the righteous shall enter into it. The same stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad therein."[1] "I cried unto the Lord with my voice: yea, even unto the Lord did I make my supplication. When my spirit was in heaviness thou knewest my path: in the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. I looked also upon my right hand, and saw there was no man that would know me. I had no place to flee unto, and no man cared for my soul. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks unto thy Name: which thing, if thou wilt grant me, then shall the righteous resort unto my company."[2] "Hearken unto me for thy truth and righteousness' sake. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul: he hath smitten my life down to the ground: he hath laid me in the darkness as the men that have been long dead. O let me hear thy loving-kindness betimes in the morning, for in thee is my trust."[3]

The remaining Psalms are pæans of victory sung by the Church to Christ triumphant after his passion. "I will magnify thee, O Lord my King, and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. Great is the

[1] Ps. cxviii. [2] Ps. cxlii. [3] Ps. cxliii.

Lord and marvellous, worthy to be praised, there is no end of his greatness. One generation shall praise thy works unto another, and declare thy power: the memorial of thy abundant kindness shall be shown, and men shall sing of thy righteousness. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth through all ages. Thou sendest forth thy commandment upon earth, and thy word runneth very swiftly. O praise the Lord of heaven, praise him in the height: Praise him, all ye angels of his! Praise him, all ye host. O sing unto the Lord a new song; let the saints be joyful in glory, let them rejoice in their beds. Praise him in his holiness. Praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him in his noble acts. Praise him according to his excellent greatness: let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord."

Inf. Your statement I understand to be that all these passages from one portion of the Scriptures only—the Psalms—are prophetic of Christ in either his suffering or glorified capacity.

Chr. Precisely. They are the cries, prayers, and supplications to God, of Jesus Christ in his state of humiliation and passion: of Jesus Christ in his human capacity; of the man Jesus Christ tried in all things, and feeling all these trials as bitterly as we ourselves, to his and our Father in heaven. They are the precal prophecy of both the inward and outward sufferings of the Messiah.

Inf. But how is it that only a few comparatively of these are in the Scriptures of the New Testament quoted as applying to Christ?

Chr. Why should more be quoted? The writings of the New Testament were addressed exclusively to the Church; that is, to persons already baptized and instructed in the doctrines and discipline of the faith of Christ. The New Testament was never intended to communicate the great truths of the Gospel for the first time to the persons to whom its various parts were addressed, but, as Saint Peter observes of his own Epistles, to remind them of the truths in which they had been already established. Most, indeed, of the Epistles are written, not with the intention of originally imparting the Gospel doctrines, but of correcting local errors in this or that Church, by bringing them briefly but decisively to the test of that standard of the faith already at their first preaching delivered by the Apostles, as they themselves had received it from Christ, once for all to the saints. The invariable method adopted by the Apostles in dealing with false conceptions of Christianity, is to recall the Church in which they prevailed to its original instruction, which appears to have been, in every Church of Apostolic foundation, uniformly one and the same. Allusions, therefore, to doctrines universally taught, known, and accepted, abound in the New Testament, though the doctrines themselves are only explicitly declared, when some error directly contravening them required them to be so. But in most instances an allusion or reference sufficed. And so with prophecy. The quotation of one or two passages was enough to remind the Church of the whole catena of prophecies with which they were connected. "Unto the word of prophecy

ye do well that ye take heed,"[1] says St. Peter, speaking thus of this prophetical instruction communicated to, and received by, the Church in its aggregate and mass.

INF. But how, again, is it, seeing these Psalms were originally the productions of David, Solomon, Asaph, and others, that you appropriate their expression as if they were literally intended to be, and were indeed, the language of Jesus Christ Himself in his incarnate humiliation?

CHR. Every prophecy or type in the Scriptures bears only in its secondary sense on the agent of its action, or the medium of its delivery, be it Abel, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Jonah, or any other representative of Christ to the then Church. Christ Himself is always its primary and permanent sense. So also with the Church itself. Its types, symbols, and ritual on earth are the mere secondaries or reflections of the Church in heaven. The substances of the Jewish Church were shadows of ours; our substances, again, are shadows of the future, yet at the same time the original Church, in heaven—that Zion and kingdom of God prepared for his redeemed before the foundations of the world. As the whole form, therefore, of the Church on earth follows, not precedes, or only precedes in reference to us, the form of the Church in heaven, so Christ Himself, its Head, precedes in his own charcter all the prophetic types and delineations of that character, given through earthly repre-

[1] 2 Pet. i. 19.

sentatives to mankind. As we look, therefore, through nature up to nature's God, we look through the Scriptures up to Christ as the sole object whom all the Scriptures, and every thing in the Scriptures, in its degree and kind, were pre-designed to present to our souls. Whether, therefore, He is termed, in his proper character, Jesus Christ, or in one of his many typical characters,—Israel, David, the Angel of the Covenant, the Rock, the Paschal Lamb, the Living Fountain,—He alone it is to whom in substance we look in every form and mode of the revelations of the Scriptures. The persons or the things through which such revelations are made to us, we consider as mere veilings or unveilings of Him the Substance, the Cause and End of their use and assumption.

Inf. This infers, of course, the pre-existence of Christ?

Chr. Certainly: the eternal Godhead of Christ. Now, are these Psalms which we read expressive of suffering or not?

Inf. I had no idea of the intensity of suffering which they do most forcibly express until I heard them read consecutively.

Chr. Of inward or spiritual suffering they are to my mind inexpressibly painful emanations and outbursts. The character they portray is this,—a man of constant devotions, of public and solitary communions with God, of absolute and limitless faith and trust in God, and in God only; ever in prayer, in many agonies; betrayed by a familiar friend, deserted by all, falsely accused, delivered to the heathen, shamed, dishonored, mocked, blasphemed,

crucified; in his expiring moments given gall to eat and vinegar to drink; dead, interred, consigned to darkness and the grave. Is this suffering?

Inf. Who can doubt its being extreme suffering?

Chr. Is the description of such a person as this contained in these Psalms? Do the Psalms themselves supply us with the description of this character?

Inf. Proceed.

Chr. The Psalms of the Passion, then, are Prophecies of the most profound and grievous suffering.

Inf. But nevertheless they may apply to man only, and not to Messiah, except as mere man, therefore not to your Christ, who is both God and man.

Chr. These very prophecies declare of this very same Sufferer that, after being thus buried, as one long dead, laid in the lowest pit, in the nethermost hell, in the place of darkness and in the deep, He should not see corruption; He should not be left in hell; He should lead captive the captivity of hell; He should ascend on high; He should receive gifts for men; He should reign over the heathen; the nations of the living and the dead should alike worship and bow down to Him; He should sit on the throne of God himself till every enemy of Himself and kingdom were subdued unto Him; that his seed should be eternal, and prayer be ever daily made to Him. Have you ever heard of more than one in whom it has ever been pretended that these extraordinary facts of terrestrial suffering and celestial aggrandizement have been verified?

Inf. No, I have not.

Chr. Who is that one?

Inf. The one whom you Christians affirm to be and believe in as the Messiah. But the truth is, these prophecies, contrary to Newman's assertion, are so plain, that out of them alone a Messiah might be originated; they might themselves be the cause of their own verifications.

Chr. We will presently examine the possibility of your hypothesis. We in our Christian creed affirm, that the series of sufferings which Jesus Christ underwent, and which terminated in his death and burial, were literally the same with those predicted to befall this great suffering Character in the Psalms; and in support of such affirmation we adduce perfectly incontrovertible historic evidence, such as Infidels themselves, up to the fact of the Burial, do not dispute or impugn.

Inf. It is possible, supposing such evidence incontrovertible, that Christ Himself so acted as to bring his life and its final incidents into conformity with these Messianic prophecies.

Chr. That is, I think, as you will find, a desperate supposition. Let us first deal with Newman, who asserts these Psalms possess no character of Messianic Suffering at all. Can such assertion be admitted, seeing that in both their Suffering and Triumphant expressions they most clearly apply to one and the same Person; and if to the Messiah in his Triumphant, most certainly to the same Messiah in his Suffering aspect?

Inf. If they apply to Messiah at all, they certainly imply a Suffering Messiah. But, granting Jesus

Christ to have fulfilled the "suffering" part of these prophecies, that fulfilment alone will not, by your own statement, constitute him the Messiah; for the triumph and the suffering must be realized by the same person; and unless the former be as amply verified as the latter in his Person, then He is not the Messiah. That, I think, is clear.

Chr. Quite; and our faith is that in Jesus Christ both were thus verified; we therefore, after the article of his burial and descent into hell, proceed to declare in the Creed—the same Jesus Christ "the third day rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end." Christ being man, might, you suppose it possible, from enthusiasm, religious monomania, or some sublime disease of the mind, have set Himself resolutely to fulfil the prophecies which indicated the successive steps in the concluding sufferings of the Messiah.

Inf. The human mind is subject to the sublimest as well as the most degrading diseases: under the influence of such diseases death loses all its terrors; it assumes positive attractions. The noblest actions also of ancient and modern patriots show us the existence of a state of mind which, equally with such diseases, spurns the fear of death. Whether Christ, therefore, labored under a Messianic delusion in reference to Himself, or whether he really was of the highest order of intrepid and dauntless spirits, or, being the latter, labored also under the former,

his fixed resolution to undergo a certain amount of suffering, for a certain end, is rendered probable by examples of similar determination constantly meeting us in the cases of enthusiasts, bigots, patriots, fanatics, in both sacred and profane history.

Chr. We do not on the point of fact differ. Christ did determine so to suffer, and for a certain end. We pronounce nothing at present as to the cause of that determination. But Infidelity must satisfactorily explain how, with every wish and resolution to do so, Jesus Christ possibly could by any devices or persuasions of his own fulfil these many and very specific prophecies of the sufferings of the Messiah. By what power could He effect the convergence of all in his own person? Your supposition infers that He, Himself, by some inscrutable means, induced Judas Iscariot to betray Him, Peter to deny Him, the Apostles to desert Him, the priesthood to arrest and consign Him to Pilate; Pilate to scourge, crown, and condemn Him; the multitudes to insist on his sentence being that of a slave, and a "very outcast of men"—Crucifixion; the two malefactors to be crucified with Him, the soldiers to cast lots on his vesture, the high priests and elders to mock and blaspheme Him on the cross, the people to curse and shake their heads at Him in his dying agonies; the centurion, after death, to pierce his side with a spear; the guard not to break one of his bones; Pilate again to grant his body to Joseph, and Joseph to bury it in the grave of the rich. Each and all of these circumstances, and many others I have not enumerated equally fulfilled, were to be realized according to

the Prophets in the Passion of the Messiah. Did Christ, being, as Infidelity holds, a mere man, persuade or compel each of these many contrary parties, Romans, Jews, High Priests, Apostles—individuals and nations—no two of them sympathizing or holding aught in common with the others, to take upon itself, in the very order the prophecies prescribed, to do unto Him the very act, and none other, which according to the same prophecies was in his Passion to be done to the Messiah? If He could do all this, do you still persist in regarding Him as nothing more than man? You assign Him, first, the entire mental command of all the Messianic prophecies; and, secondly, a power by which He concentrates, through the most extraordinary coalition of conflicting and antipathetic parties, the fulfilment of them all upon his own person—that person being during the completion of some of the most essential suspended in either helpless agony or absolutely dead upon the cross.

Inf. I am reduced, certainly, to a dilemma.

Chr. And granting, for a moment, the correctness of your supposition, He that knew so minutely and thoroughly each prophecy that bore upon the Passion, must as thoroughly have known each also that bore upon the triumph of the Messiah. Unless after fulfilling the former on the cross and in the grave, He could also out of the grave fulfil the latter, of what possible avail would the minutest realization of the former be? The greatest of the many tests of the Messiahship were not to precede, but to follow, the death of the Messiah. If Christ were man only, He knew the Messianic prophecies were such as, however

astonishingly coincident with them his whole life had been, put it totally out of his power to carry on the deception of being the Messiah in death. The resurrection from death, the ascension, the enthronement, the commission to judge the world, the sending forth of the Gospel, the consignation of the paternal power, the pouring forth of the Spirit, were declared by prophecy to be integral proofs of the Messiahship, but how could the least of these be given by a dead man in the grave?

Inf. The most insignificant of them could not be given by a mere man, living or dead.

Chr. But further. Had Christ thus, according to the minutest predictions of Scripture, both suffered and triumphed, yet even then there would be a mass of prophecy which his life before his betrayal must as completely have harmonized with, as with other prophecies did his passion, death, and resurrection after his betrayal. The Messiahship before birth, after birth, in life, in death, after death, is walled in by Eternal Prophecies which render its usurpation or assumption by any earthly power, intellect, or conspiracy, a total impossibility. If Christ had not been born of a Virgin, at Bethlehem, of the race of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, of the family of David, in that very era during the standing of the second temple,—if He had not been a worker of signs, marvels, and miracles, in the midst of Israel,—if, in fact, a thousand prophecies appropriated to the Messiah had not already met and been verified in his person, previous to his Crucifixion,—neither would the Jews have cared for any pretensions of his to the Messiahship,

nor would the crucifixion and its results, though in every point consistent with the other prophecies, have gone an inch to establish his title to it; that title would have been already invalidated by some notorious prophetic defect in the facts or events of his previous life. Unless Jesus Christ were the Messiah, the Messiah is not yet come; in this proposition, Christians, Jews, and Infidels would, I think, agree.

Inf. Yes, perforce: for who, for these thousand years and more past, has ever advanced the shadow of a claim to it?

Chr. Suppose, then, you start a Messiah now.

Inf. Explain yourself.

Chr. Not only the Scriptures promise, but Jews, Christians, and Islamites, without exception, believe in the advent—past, present, or future—of the Messiah. If the advent be not past, it must be yet to come. Now I will challenge you to bring forward in the nineteenth century any imaginable claimant to the Messiahship whose pretension to it the prophecies of Scripture will not at once baffle and explode, whose access to it they will not render unapproachable, whose assumption of it, for even a brief period, will not, with every one who knows the Scriptures, be a sheer absurdity.

Inf. That may easily be, for the Messiah of the Scriptures was to be born at a certain point of time which is long past, in a certain condition of the Jewish nation which has long since disappeared, in a certain moral infancy of the heathen world beyond Judæa, which it has long since outgrown. These

requisitions would alone make the assumption of modern Messiahship an impossibility.

Chr. Ah! these would form only a few of the barriers, tests, and crucibles, which a pseudo-Messiah would have to confront in the prophetic Scriptures. If all mankind conspired together, we should not be able to get six of the Messianic prophecies of Scripture, apparently the easiest and the lightest, to meet together and be fulfilled in any one individual in the whole world. It is not in the compass of human power and ingenuity to do it. On the other hand, Christianity, with its millions of intellects, holds all of them—Infidelity admits the majority of them—to have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. In Him, from whom in heaven all these oracles of God proceeded, they are on earth and in heaven again united and consummated.

Inf. I may admit the fulfilment of the prophecies of Messianic suffering by Jesus Christ, but the fulfilment of the triumphant prophecies by Him, or any one else, I entirely deny. That Christ rose from the dead, with all that follows in your creed, I do not believe. The circumstances of his death, though very deplorable, and presenting a most singular counterpart of the death predicted in the Jewish Scriptures of the Messiah, are still quite in accordance with the manners, mode of punishment, processes of execution, social, judicial, and political facts of the people, the empire, the period in which they occurred. But when you take me from earth to heaven, when you call upon me to believe that this man so crucified and buried, now sits and lives forever in the power

of God at God's right hand, I have a right to demand the evidence on which so extraordinary a statement proceeds. The death, with most of its circumstances, tallies with history; but the resurrection and its consequences, as asserted by you, contradict all history.

CHR. Let us first see what History itself at present is. Who is there now, as these prophecies predict, higher, by their own confession, than "the kings of the earth?" Who is it whom the whole civilized world "worships?" To whom is it that prayer is daily made and praise daily ascribed? Who has become the Light of those nations who were anciently Gentiles—Greece, Italy, Russia, Spain, Germany, France, ourselves, the Americas? Whose also are now becoming the "utmost parts of the earth"—Polynesia, Australia, New Zealand, the isles of the Pacific? Before whose Spirit and whose religion are the vast idolatries of India and China tottering to their fall? Whose commandment, whose Gospel is it that is now "running very swiftly upon earth?" You cannot deny that, be it the result of truth or superstition, of the power of God or the craft of man, the fact is unquestionable; Jesus Christ the Crucified is the person so adored, praised, and prayed to. He is acknowledged as God, and his religion accepted as from God by a seed of nations tenfold, perhaps, more in number than the whole population of the world was at the date of his Crucifixion. Yet you say History contradicts the Resurrection! Here is the history of the world in epitome since the crucifixion; and what is it but the mere fulfilment of

those things which these prophecies had of old announced as the inevitable consequences of this very Resurrection of the Messiah? What was then Prophecy is now History: that is the sole difference.

Inf. The Resurrection itself is an exception to all our human experience: men once dead do not rise again from the dead.

Chr. You touch not the point at issue. He whom the nations of Christendom now worship as their God and Saviour is the very same Person who, being, in minute accordance with the prophecies, crucified, was, according to the same prophecies, to rise again, and his resurrection to be followed by the very events which since then have constituted, on the largest scale, the history of the world, and now surround us on every side. Those events you admit: the prophecies which in express terms predict such events are there in your hands: predicting them as infallibly to follow the resurrection of the crucified Messiah. They have followed; the Crucified is gloried in by Christendom as its King, its Saviour, its Everlasting Life! Yet you say, "of his Resurrection you require evidence!" All history since the crucifixion is the evidence of the resurrection also of Christ. If not, let us hear how you account for this one fact among hundreds. How is it that Jesus Christ is thus the object of the worship and prayers of Christendom eighteen centuries after his Crucifixion?

Inf. Has not Gibbon explained it?

Chr. No; nor touched on its explanation. Had the reasons he assigns for the progress of Chris-

tianity during the first three centuries been at all to the purpose in accounting for the existence itself of Christianity, or even of the first Christian, which they utterly fail to do, there are fifteen centuries since then of a still increasing worship of Jesus Christ to be accounted for. Here are the prophecies that He, the Crucified, should be the worship of many nations, and finally of the world. Here is Christendom the verification of those prophecies. My question is, By what Power have they been verified? by what Power has Scriptural prophecy become modern history? Is it by that of a dead man in the grave?

Inf. The fact that the same Person who was once crucified, is now universally adored as God, is not by any one to be denied. Jesus Christ, I admit, is prayed to as being one God with the Father, co-eternal and co-omnipotent, by the numerous millions of orthodox Christendom through the four quarters of the globe. That fact requires an explanation on behalf of Infidelity which, before our discussion terminates, I will attempt to supply; but what staggers me now is, that these prophecies should, so many thousand years ago, predict that such would be the fact. I do not see my way here.

Chr. Cast aside the Scriptures entirely; proceed on only what you see with your own senses—Christ Jesus everywhere worshipped as God; trace Him back to his tomb, as dead as the stone itself; let Him remain so; let Him never rise; let Him be mere man; let his body, like any other man's, see corruption; let not the faithfulness of God be in any

sense shown in its destruction, or the loving-kindness of God in his grave; let Him be what the infidel would fain have Him to be, and let the resurrection be a delusion. How does all this hypothesis help you in any degree to solve the hard fact of the universal worship of this Christ? Does it not involve you in far more perplexing difficulties than any which our faith proposes to your acceptance. For see, the fact by itself baffles you; the prophecies by themselves baffle you: neither the fact nor the prophecies can be ignored; the one is before all men's eyes, the others are in all men's hands. The connection between them, again, by whatever Power established, cannot be controverted, yet cannot be admitted, without conceding that the same power which has established the fact inspired also the prophecies. I must beg the intellect of Infidelity to extricate itself from the position in which "the more and more mouldering prop of prophecy," as Newman calls it, here fixes it.

Inf. None of them may, after all, as Newman suggests, in reality apply to Jesus Christ.

Chr. We had, I thought, very effectually settled that question in the Crucifixion and its incidents—in his whole life and character preceding the Crucifixion. But what if they do not? Dissolve the connection; Jesus Christ Himself, his character, his vast spiritual kingdom, the power his very name exercises over countless souls is a greater difficulty to you without, than He is with, prophecy. Infidelity desires to supersede the Church as "the Teacher of the nations." I come to Infidelity; I request it, without alluding to the

Scriptures or prophecy, to teach me "who and what He whom the nations worship is." It can teach me nothing; it is itself inexpressibly at a loss to suggest who He is. If it says "God," it becomes Christian; if it says "man only," his kingdom, power, and glory, even on this earth, are in an instant seen, and almost admitted to be, irreconcilable with mere manhood. If it denies such power, the world itself, from east to west, lifts up its voice to proclaim it; and if it did not, multitudes profess themselves ready to sacrifice the world to prove it. Thus Infidelity, being darkness itself as to the great spiritual power which exercises supremacy in the souls of men, has nothing of its own to communicate in explanation of the fact of that power. If I proceed to say, "Here are very ancient Scriptures in which I find all these modern facts laid down as to happen in certain times and order; how come these ancient Scriptures to know any thing, much less the very facts themselves of modern times?"—Infidelity, again, except at the expense of ceasing to be Infidelity, has no rational explanation at its command. I proceed, lastly, to compare the facts Infidelity cannot deny with the Scriptures it cannot ignore. There exists, I find, perfect harmony between them; and this harmony constitutes only part of the strength of that kingdom it dreams of subverting and succeeding. All research and investigation lead me thus from Infidelity, as utterly unable to teach one positive truth, to Christianity, which, teaching me a vast system of positive truths, places also the Scriptures in my hands, saying, "these things are not of to-day nor

yesterday, they were written of old in the Scriptures, and they are fulfilled according to the Scriptures because the Scriptures are of God." Here is reason, here is consistency, here is an explanation in accordance with all my conceptions of the power and wisdom of God, of the kingdom and the Scriptures of Christ. I find in it that which accounts for all which my intellect is capable of comprehending in the matter: my intellect therefore compels me to be a Christian: it cannot, and it will not, when such facts as these tower up before it between heaven and earth, remain content with the Infidelity which has only two phrases in its vocabulary, "I don't know," or, "I don't believe." You observe that I give you full permission to dismiss all discussion about the faith, if you can without it satisfactorily solve the present facts of Christianity. But this permission only complicates your embarrassments. Christ with the Scriptures is hard to be solved, but Christ without the Scriptures is not to be solved at all by Infidelity. He is the same great Fact, but a deeper and more awful mystery than ever.

Inf. I demur to accepting the Resurrection itself as a fact.

Chr. And the non-acceptance of it redoubles the difficulty you experience in explaining the events subsequent to the Resurrection. But let us, according to our rule, examine it both as a fact and a prophecy, a prophecy of the Spirit of Christ in the Scriptures, and an act of Christ Himself in person. "Sir," said the Sanhedrim to Pilate, "we remember that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three

days I will rise again."[1] This prophecy was a public challenge by Jesus Christ to the world, to death, to Satan, to hell, sufficient of itself to clench the whole question of his Messiahship and Godhead. No test more wholly to the point could be wished for by the Jewish or Infidel world. It was a defiance delivered by one person to the whole created universe to keep Him when crucified, dead, and buried, more than three days in the grave. Has any similar challenge been given from the beginning of the world to this day? Why did Christ alone give it—give it before that very passover in which He knew and announced that He should be crucified—give it to Jews, Romans, the princes, and the people alike—so give it that there was neither Jew nor Roman in Jerusalem who could not on the third day walk to the sepulchre and convince himself whether the dead body of the great Prophet of Israel was there or not? Well might St. Paul, I think, declare that Christ triumphed "openly:" for could there be a more open "show" of challenge, battle, victory, total and overwhelming conquest in the act of death itself over death and corruption? And you, as a scholar, know the extreme jealousy with which the Roman government regarded the slightest approximation to such a Messianic provocation as this; it would mark and at once kill the man who made it; it did so, not only individually, but it uprooted the nation itself for subsequently crediting such an assertion as a ground for action. Thus in the case of our Saviour; the Roman guard was stationed; the

[1] Matt. xxvii. 13.

stone sealed with the government seal; the sepulchre itself was new; no corpse but that of Christ had ever been deposited therein; by day the eastern sun, by night the full moon of the paschal festival shed a flood of light on the tomb, on the garden, on the mount, on the Roman watch; the Jewish people, with its priesthood and Sanhedrim, formed a more extended conclave of eyes jealously fixed on every motion of a leaf on that high and all-exposed ascent. They had to keep that dead body for three days only in that sealed and guarded tomb. They had only to show it the fourth day to Jerusalem, and, lo! the Crucified, who made Himself equal with God, was an impostor; their own great king was yet to come; their consciences were not only absolved from blood-guiltiness, but the blasphemer had justly and righteously perished. Only for three days! on the third day He must rise. If He rose the first day, the second day, or any other day than the very day announced by the Scriptures and Himself, He would be a mystery indeed, but not the Messiah, not the Christ of God. Their pride, nationality, bigotry, conscience, were all fearfully and vigilantly armed to keep in self-defence that dead body still dead for three days in the very centre of assembled Israel, and in the sight of congregated Jerusalem. The third day came, and with it Christ and the Resurrection; the prophecy had been as a fire of expectation kindled by Christ Himself in every heart; the fulfilment of it was indeed the earthquake that shook and still shakes the world: it was the commencement of the dissolution of Judah, and of the great gathering of the Gentiles.

INF. Newman does not grapple, as I could wish, with the Resurrection.

CHR. Will you grapple with it?

INF. It is so astounding a statement that a man scarcely knows how to begin to grapple with it.

CHR. The Jews were more practical; they did grapple with both the prophecy and the fact. They had a dead body in their absolute power; a body ten times dead; lacerated, flayed, nailed through, spirit-killed, heart-pierced; never had death so complete a victim in his prison-house; over it was the sepulchre of the rock; over the sepulchre, the seal; over the seal, the Roman discipline; and over the Roman discipline, the priestly jealousy of the Sanhedrim. This was grappling practically with the question of the Resurrection. Theirs was no theory, no closet hypothesis as to possibility or impossibility. Christ had fixed a day beyond which no power in heaven or earth could detain Him in the grave. If they could keep Him beyond that time, they were safe; if not, all things told them "the vineyard would for ever pass away from them." They had graver and more vital reasons for preventing, than any modern Infidel has for doubting, the Resurrection. What more than they did, could all London do, to prevent the resurrection of a dead body buried in St. James's or the Green Park?

INF. If I stationed a regiment to guard a dead body in a stone sepulchre from rising again, all London would certainly deem me insane; but if I stationed it to guard against its exhumation and removal for sinister purposes by the fanatic followers

of the deceased, they would acknowledge the precaution necessary and judicious.

CHR. And certain to be effective. On the third day the tomb is found open, the ponderous stone not to be moved lightly nor by few hands is seen rolled off, the seal is broken, and the body has disappeared. What would London say to that?

INF. The precautions were insufficient and ineffective.

CHR. "The disciples came by night and stole him away, while the soldiers slept?"

INF. Just so.

CHR. Yet precautions more efficient could not have been suggested or executed: if any such could, specify them.

INF. If the dead was by some inexplicable fatality, some solitary exception to all the laws of nature, doomed to rise the third day to life again, a Roman army of twelve legions could not have prevented it. Tens of thousands would in such eventuality have been as inefficient as a single cohort. If the object was only to guard against any clandestine attempt on the part of the Apostles, and a few women, no formidable force was required to resist or give the alarm against such assailants; the attempt, in fact, itself would have been the confession and detection of the whole imposture. I do not, therefore, see what stronger or more judicious precautions could, under the circumstances of the case, have been taken.

CHR. Nevertheless, the disciples, you think, did succeed in coming and stealing Him?

Inf. It must have been so, how else could the body have disappeared?

Chr. One of the infinite dilemmas of Infidelity. How was it possible for the disciples, unobserved, at such a time, such a place, in such an excited state of the whole population of Jerusalem, through people, priests, and soldiers, every zealot for the law, every witness of the Crucifixion on the *qui vive* for the "third day," to get at the tomb—roll off the stone—and through guards and ten thousand vigilant eyes, carry off the dead body? On the other hand, if they did not "steal" Him, how possibly could the body have disappeared? It was worth their law, their temple, their priesthood, their whole vineyard and inheritance to the ruling body of Jerusalem. Why, if stolen, was it not—being more precious to them than its weight in gold—attempted to be recovered? Why were not the whole number of the Apostles immediately summoned before the Sanhedrim, and examined on the subject? Could they regain possession of it, though thus unaccountably escaped their hands, it would convince every religious Jew of the utter falsehood of the pretensions of the crucified Nazarene. They neither could do that, nor dare they attempt to substitute another corpse for it to the people; the face, the person, every lineament of the "man of sorrows" were too familiar to the nation, and that nation was now assembled in Jerusalem. Moreover had they selected one crucified, with pierced hands and feet, where would have been the lacerations of the scourge, the impalement of the crown of thorns, the heart spear-lanced, and the unbroken

bones: the very "signs" of prophecy and Messiahship, their own ruthless infatuation had caused to be added to a thousand preceding ones? What the Jews, with the most potent inducements of interest and religion, of their whole policy being at stake, did yet not do, would of itself be to me a guarantee of the fact of the Resurrection. Whoever heard that a whole nation should first lose a dead body publicly crucified, publicly interred, publicly guarded, and having lost it, should then find it impossible to discover a single trace of what had become of it, as a dead body? The thing has no parallel. The Jews did nothing, because they could do nothing, to disprove the Resurrection. No movement could they have made which would not have rendered the fact more notorious, dangerous, and destructive, to its gainsayers. But let us suppose the Apostles did steal the body, they must have done something with it, what did they do?

INF. What could they do? they could not keep a body which had already been three days in the tomb.

CHR. Scarcely.

INF. They buried it then.

CHR. Where, how, and when?

INF. Anywhere—any way they could—as secretly as they could.

CHR. To what end, and for what purpose? They stole it, you suppose, at the risk of their lives in the full light of the paschal moon, from such an eminence as Calvary, from the vigilance of the strictest military discipline the world has ever known, out of the honorable tomb of the rich man, Joseph of

Arimathea, himself, like themselves, a disciple, to bury it in some other place, anywhere, in any manner, as clandestinely and as dishonorably as they could. Do you believe this of the Blessed Virgin, of St. Peter, St. John, Mary Magdalene, and the rest of the disciples? Are you not asking me to believe a statement at least quite as wonderful as the Resurrection, yet, unlike the Resurrection, advancing not a single reason to challenge my assent to its moral and physical improbabilities.

Inf. I am no believer in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, but it would be disingenuous not to confess that all the efforts I have read to disprove the fact itself appear to me to be failures. The Sanhedrim and the Priesthood made the best they could of the fact that, in spite of the precautionary measures of the Roman Government and their own, the body of the Crucified had disappeared.

Chr. "Why do the heathen so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his Anointed. Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn; the Lord shall have them in derision."[1] Is there aught in this prophecy, think you, descriptive of the circumstances preceding and accompanying the Resurrection? Was there no "derision in heaven" when the "counsel" was taken, the stone sealed, the guard appointed and set? No "scorn" at this league of earth and hell, of

[1] Ps. ii.

man and Satan, to keep the "Lord of Life" in the power of death?

Inf. Beyond the fact of disappearance, I cannot persuade myself to go. Yet, how it could disappear, why it should disappear; why the Apostles, if they could, should wish to possess themselves of a dead body, which, by remaining dead, convicted them of credulity, and their Master of the darkest imposition; how, above all, they should become so suddenly changed, in diametrically the opposite way to which the detection and consciousness of such imposition would have changed them; how they came to adhere, to the end of their lives, to the statement, that for days they had, with their own senses, seen, felt, handled, eaten with, and conversed with "Jesus Christ raised to life from the dead," identified to them as such by moral, mental, physical proofs, are considerations which present as serious difficulties as the Resurrection itself. I scarcely know here what to believe, what not to believe.

Chr. Meanwhile, on the other side, the Scriptures present you with prophecy on prophecy, predictive of the Resurrection and its results from that time to this, and to the end of the world. Annul prophecy, the fact of the Resurrection remains, as you confess, never disproved; annul both prophecy and the Resurrection, the religious, and, with it indissolubly wedded, the secular history of the last eighteen centuries, still confronts the perplexed "Intellect" of Infidelity. Thus, the further your "Intellect" severs itself from Christianity, the deeper it plunges into confusion worse confounded.

But let us dispatch this subject of prophecy, for we have others of no less importance to discuss.

INF. I will proceed then to another objection in connection with it. "The prophecies of the New Testament," states Newman,[1] "are not many." Now, one would imagine that the Messiah would have delivered many prophecies in his own person.

CHR. And so He did. Newman's objection in this, as in previous instances, has no foundation. Nearly half the number of parables, for instance, delivered by our Blessed Lord, are prophecies—parabolic prophecies.

INF. How is that to be proved?

CHR. Let us take one for illustration; this—about the briefest—of the Drag-net.[2] "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind."

INF. But this is a mere parable.

CHR. A parabolic prophecy.

INF. I do not perceive it.

CHR. Because, instead of putting yourself back at the time-point of its delivery, looking forward to the strange things it predicts, you put yourself in A. D. 1854, in the midst of these things themselves long fulfilled, and therefore familiarized to your mind. Take any part of the Christian Church—the Anglican Church, for example—was it in England at the time our Lord spoke this parable?

INF. No.

CHR. Did Britain offer itself to the Christian religion?

[1] Phases of Faith, page 115. [2] Matt. xiii. 47.

Inf. No.

Chr. Nor manufacture it at home.

Inf. No.

Chr. Something was "cast over" Britain?

Inf. Admitted.

Chr. By the agency of men?

Inf. Clearly.

Chr. And Britain became "gathered" into the Church?

Inf. Just so.

Chr. Have all the Christians in Britain, since its conversion to the faith, been "good?" Has the Church included none whom we must not honestly confess to have shamed not only Christianity, but Humanity itself?

Inf. Truly it has. Your great reformer of religion, Henry VIII., about the worst among them.

Chr. Is every member, or every listener in our churches at present really a "saint"—really "good?"

Inf. With a safe conscience as to not being guilty of uncharitableness, I answer, No.

Chr. Part are "bad," then—with a little of the faith, hope, and charity of a Christian in them. Yet they are in the Church—truly members of the Church; they remain in the Church; they come voluntarily to the service, preaching, and ordinances of the Church. If any attempt were made to cut them off from the Church, their anger and resentment would evince itself by the adoption of very cogent measures against the aggressor. The Church thus literally gathers of every kind of character—yet it is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Inf. I understand.

Chr. Is it not so also in France, Spain, Italy, in every country professing the faith of this "kingdom?"

Inf. No doubt.

Chr. And always has been. Characters the least in unison with the characteristics of this kingdom are not only gathered into it, but, as a general rule, are the most jealous of any interference with their right—material or spiritual—of title and possession therein. How, think you, would a mailed Crusader, dripping with Saracen gore, have replied to your allegation "that he was no Christian?"

Inf. Probably he would, in all sincerity, have cleaved my skull with his battle-axe.

Chr. And Henry VIII., had you denounced him as a frightful wen on the Church of Christ?

Inf. He would have chained me between a Papist and a Protestant, and burned the three of us together in Smithfield.

Chr. And Charles IX. of France, had you requested him to judge himself by the Nine Benedictions of Christianity?

Inf. I should have added another victim to the night of St. Bartholomew.

Chr. And Cromwell, streaming with his country's blood, professing he slew thousands of his fellow-subjects in England, and his tens of thousands in Ireland, in the name of the Lord—could you have brought him side by side with our Lord and *His* warfare? What think you he would have done to you for drawing the attention of the nation to the contrast?

Inf. Hanged me for a malignant.

Chr. Are these, and such like, the characters whom, *à priori*, we should imagine a kingdom openly heralding itself as the "kingdom of heaven," would or could gather in among its subjects and citizens?

Inf. Not exactly.

Chr. Yet further. How came such characters to permit themselves for a moment to be "gathered in," and being so, to make it their chief pride to be, not only fish in the Gospel net, but the very champions of the net itself in the sea? Devise a kingdom of heaven for mankind. Before a single disciple understands its principles and constitution, place yourself on a rock from which a sweeping net, searching every hollow and recess within its circle at the bottom of the sea, is cast by fishermen. Proclaim, "My kingdom, like this net, will gather the bad as well as the good throughout the world, and yet it will be the kingdom of God." Would you say this, or rather would not such a comparison be the last which human prudence and probability would dictate to your judgment? For, you would argue, either such a kingdom can never be the kingdom of heaven, or, being such, it must of necessity exclude the "bad." The bad themselves will never desire to be gathered into its fold. Nevertheless, just as our Saviour prophesied, so it has come to pass. His Church gathers, as you see, of every kind; it sweeps the alley and the gallows, as well as the palace and the bench. All descriptions of character profess that they are "gathered" into it. Is not that the fact?

INF. Certainly.

CHR. Was it a fact when the parable was delivered?

INF. How could it be? for the net was not cast from the rock.

CHR. The parable, then, is a prophecy. The Church in this parish, this kingdom, in the world, is that prophecy fulfilled. Was not Christ, then, in this, and many similar parables, the Prophet of the future? The prophecy was directly opposed to all the ideas of his own nation and age, as well as to the apparent tendency of human nature and the heavenly designation of his own religion.

INF. He was a Prophet, at any rate, of Intuition.

CHR. Further, men like Henry VIII., Charles IX., Philip II., Calvin, Cromwell, John Knox—zealous, or gloomy, or fanatic, or morose, or tyrannous characters,—have tried to make the Church somewhat else than what Christ prophesied it was to be. With what effect?—the destruction, so far as they could effect it, of its heavenly-mindedness—of its being the kingdom of heaven. How came Christ alone to lay it down that to gather, and not reject "the bad" in this world, is that quality whereby his religion is the kingdom of heaven? Was that also by "Intuition?" Can you suggest any other Intuitionist who has said, "My kingdom is the kingdom of heaven; gather, therefore, into it the bad?"

INF. It must have astounded Jews and heathen alike; for such an expression appears to involve positive contradiction.

CHR. So the Reformers of Christ—if I may with-

out profanity say so—have always thought. They have always taken upon them to alter the form which Christ Himself has selected for the vessel of his salvation—a gatherer-in of the good and bad indifferently. They, on the contrary, must make it a caster-off of the bad—they must purge and purify it of all such as, according to their own ideas, are the bad. But men will not be so "purged" and "purified." The world has, in this sense, always had a truer view of the Church than either those who would confine it to "the godly," after their own definition of "the godly," or those who secede from it because it is composed of "good and bad." The attempt to form a Church into which none but "saints," the pious, or the godly, shall be admitted, violates the very character and duties which Himself has assigned to his Church—to gather in the lost; to have mercy, and not sacrifice; to do good to all; and to leave the judgment as to who are really good and really bad to Himself. But read the next verse.

Inf. "Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down and gathered the good into vessels, and cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world. The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just."

Chr. The first part of the prophecy—the gathering in of all kinds—we ourselves see in the fulness of action; do you think the second part, the severing, not by men but by angels, not now but at the end of the world, will be equally verified?

Inf. A pregnant question.

Chr. Is not the "separation" more in accordance, according to human reasoning, with the kingdom of heaven, than the "gathering?" The gathering is admitted—what say you to the "severing?"

Inf. It is possible.

Chr. If you reject it, you will, Reason being arbitress, have admitted the less, and rejected the greater probability. Men, under Christ, gather now the "good and bad" into the Church. Angels, under Christ, at the end of the world, will sever the good from the bad. Is this hard for Reason to believe?

Inf. In this way many of the parables may be certainly ranked among the more prominent prophecies.

Chr. Compare them with the progress and state of Christ's Church, and you will find them prophecies of the exactest kind, opening to view centuries of future events. Some, as this of the net, carried on beyond the end of the world, even to the judgment day. Is not that Prophecy, in the simplest words indeed, but on the most stupendous scale? We do not know how to read Christ, unless we have learnt that the weight of eternity lies upon every one of his words. As certainly as we now see the "gathering," we shall hereafter see the "severing."

We have now gone through instances of oral, visual, precal, and parabolical prophecies. Scores of others, equally clear and pointed, might be enumerated. But before we conclude this portion of our discussion, may I ask what your notion of Prophecy is?

Inf. Simply a prediction.

CHR. Without supernatural communication?

INF. Why—no.

CHR. Simple prediction does not define Prophecy. Can you name one prophet disconnected with the Church of Christ, in either its ancient or present aspect?

INF. Do you mean one that, by supernatural influence, made known beforehand the events of futurity?

CHR. Yes.

INF. Seneca; he prophesied of the discovery of America.

CHR. By inspiration?

INF. If I grant that, I concede the whole principle of inspiration in all its phases.

CHR. That is for your consideration.

INF. He predicted, but not by inspiration.

CHR. He was no prophet then?

INF. But prediction is as wonderful as prophecy.

CHR. Ah! you too, the Infidel, like the Jew, would make the "miraculum" the test; must you too, like Lord Herbert of Cherbury, have your "sign?"

INF. But if a simple human prediction be as miraculous as an inspired prophecy, whence can Isaiah claim advantage over Seneca?

CHR. No analogy exists between them. Did the Atlantic Ocean, the West Indies, and America, exist in Seneca's time?

INF. They did; what then?

CHR. It is not the future existence then of something which in his own time had no existence which he predicts, but simply that certain lands which then existed would at a future time be discovered. It is

not a creation, but a discovery, that he foretells, a discovery of facts suspected long before to have existence. For thus writes Strabo:—"In the hemisphere between the shores of the west of Europe, and of the east of Asia, many other inhabited continents of land may exist."[1] Contrast with this any one of the many prophecies of Isaiah relative to our Lord: this for instance:—"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; my elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I will put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth Judgment to the Gentiles. I the Lord have called him in righteousness, and I will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant to the people, for a light to the Gentiles. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them." When this prophecy was delivered Jesus Christ was not born; the Jews were the only people professing to be in covenant with God; the heathen had no conception of even the meaning of the words "covenant with God." The Jews had no conception of a Saviour who was to be a "light to the Gentiles." Neither Jews nor Gentiles had any conception of such a character as "the Delight of the soul of God, who would not break a bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax: who would bring the blind to salvation by a way they knew not; who would lead them in paths they had not known; who would make darkness light, and crooked things straight before them." Jesus Christ was born 712 years after this prophecy was spoken, 2566 years have therefore

[1] Strabo, lib. i. p. 65.

elapsed since its delivery, but what was then incredible and unintelligible Prophecy has since, through a succession of political and spiritual revolutions, become the normal state of the civilized world. The then heathen nations "orbis terrarum," have ceased to be heathen; they have ceased to be so in one especial way: the faith they have embraced is one strictly of covenant with God in Jesus Christ. The question here is not as to the abstract truth or falsehood of Christianity, but here are Christ and Christianity, false or true, prophesied by Isaiah as to be accepted by the heathen hereafter as their light, their covenant, and their salvation. He speaks of things having then no existence in even the imaginations of Jews or heathens as certain to be called into future existence by the power of the Almighty. He announces, "homine judice," present non-existences, present incredibilities, present impossibilities, as, "Deo vindice," certain to form the future state of the religious and intellectual world. Can we rank Strabo's assertion, or Seneca's prediction, in the same category with such a prophecy as this? Try to allege some other non-Scriptural prophet. Why not bring forward Mohammed, who is, if I may judge from this work of Foxton's on your table, a great favorite at present with the "representative-men" school.

Inf. But he never delivered a prophecy in the sense we are now discussing, nor indeed in any other sense of which I am aware.

Chr. Nevertheless all Mohammedans declare their faith to be "that there is one God, and Mohammed is

the prophet of God." Neologists, Pantheists, Deists, Atheists, appear as much inclined to believe in him as in Jesus Christ, only they are sadly perplexed for a single moral or intellectual reason for such faith, and they dare not profess admiration for him in his real character as the founder of a system of animal licentiousness and brutal force for the religion of man. Now nearly 4600 years elapsed between the creation of the world and the birth of Mohammed; during that time the Mohammedans do not pretend there exists a single prophecy as to his birth, life, character, or death. He himself most prudently disclaimed all pretensions to miracles or prophecy, for, unlike his modern panegyrists, he knew better than to imagine it easy to impose a miracle upon masses of men in the perfect possession of their senses.

Inf. Perhaps so. By "prophet" the Islamites evidently mean not an inspired predictor of futurity, but one who has received his commission from God. A man may receive such a commission without having included in it the powers of prophecy and miracles.

Chr. As the clergy of the Church, for instance, receive theirs.

Inf. They do not pretend to it in the sense in which Mohammed claimed it.

Chr. Certainly not. All they assume is to be ministers of Him who had received such a Divine commission for our salvation, and proved the reality of it by signs, wonders, marvels, and prophecies utterly above all power, short of God's, to perform or enunciate. But supposing the claim to divine

authority in the original source of mission, Christ's or Mohammed's, to be admitted in the entire absence of such credentials from the Supreme Being, I see not what prevents you or me, or any man, woman, or child, in the streets, from asserting a divine commission for himself to religionize the world according to his own ideas, and for any purpose he pleases.

Inf. But Jesus Christ Himself did not lay such great stress Himself on his miracles.

Chr. You err, I think: He laid so great stress that He explicitly declares the Jews would not have sinned in rejecting Him, except for these miracles. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. I have a greater witness than that of John; the same works that I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me. If I had not done among them the works that never man did, they would not have sin; now they have no cloak for their sin." When a Mormonite therefore comes to a clergyman, as they have come to me, preferring the claim of Joseph Smith to be a new Saviour, the clergyman may justly say, "I am the minister of Jesus Christ, who proved Himself to be the Son of God by doing among men the works that God alone can do: He has ever since continued to exercise the same power by perpetuating and extending his salvation to the ends of the earth. What greater works, to supersede Him whose mission I bear, and whose servant I am, has Joseph Smith shown before the world?" Would not such be a fair challenge?

Inf. I think it would.

CHR. And if fair to Joseph Smith, surely fair to Mohammed, surely fair to every one claiming to supersede the authority of Jesus Christ over the souls of men.

INF. But did not Christ Himself supersede Moses?

CHR. Does He anywhere say so—does He not everywhere declare the very reverse, that he came to fulfil, not supersede, Moses and the prophets? Is not one of his titles, the Alpha, He that was from the beginning. Moses was his witness, every prophet his herald, yet for all this He states the Jews would have been justified in rejecting Him unless He had in the midst of them done the works of that omnipotence which had commissioned Him. Now why did Mohammed shrink from that test?

INF. Because miracles do not, as Newman expresses it, produce "moral conviction."

CHR. And you really suppose Mohammed to have thought as Newman does on this subject, that he abstained from working miracles because they would not on certain characters produce conversion of life, which is, I infer, what Newman means by "moral conviction."

INF. That would be supposing too much. He performed none simply because he *could* perform none.

CHR. Clearly so; yet one single miracle would, in such a cause as his, have been invaluable for his purposes. For the same reason he never risked a prophecy with reference to himself; a few months or a few years, perhaps a few days, would have exposed him for what he truly was,—a false and most pernicious impostor. But multitudes of Scriptural prophe-

cies bearing directly on Christ are not only in Him, and Him alone, fulfilled,—but, as in the instance we have have examined, He put it, by prophecies of his own as to the time, days, manner, and circumstances of his death and Resurrection, in the power of his own followers, as well as the Jews and Romans, to test the truth of his mission, and pronounce Him an impostor or the Messiah in his own lifetime, on the spot itself of his death. He put it in the power of everybody there and then, by prophecies bearing on his own person, to prove his mission whether it was from God or not. He puts it in our power of after centuries by other prophecies bearing on his mystic person here,—his Church,—to prove it by other tests which his followers and enemies could not then apply. Mohammedanism then does not pretend to either miracles or prophecy,—does Buddhism, Brahminism, or any other religion in the world?

Inf. You do not mean to assert that prophecy is entirely limited to Christianity?

Chr. Certainly. Infidels have fallen into the habit of speaking of this and that element of Christianity, as if they were elements also of every religion on the surface of the globe. You know prophecy to have preceded Christianity. Christianity is the European religion, the religion of your country; all religions are in your opinion much the same, and if prophecy be a part of Christianity, it must be, you infer, part also of every other religion. Such is the process you call "intellectual induction." Well, name the religion, ancient or modern, except Christianity, which advances the faintest claim to the

Divine evidence of prophecy, of successions of prophets, of prophecies from the creation to the consummation of the world?

Inf. The challenge, I apprehend, is new.

Chr. As old as Isaiah. "Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth and show us what shall happen: let them show the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare as things to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter. Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and before, that we may say, He is righteous? yea, there is none that showeth, yea, there is none that declareth. They are all vanity; their works are nothing."[1] It was unanswerable then: can you answer it now? From the whole non-Scriptural annals of mankind supply me with one single written prediction delivered and known one hundred years before its realization?

Inf. You thus affirm no prophecies to have ever existed among mankind except such as are recorded in Scripture.

Chr. Yes; but I do not assert that the knowledge of them was in all cases derived from the Scriptures. The deeply seated presentiments in the minds of certain nations as to their times and destinies, which, more than any external circumstances, formed their character, were the prophecies of God written, as his law was, on their consciences, without hand. In no other way can, for example, the prophetic spirit of

[1] Isaiah xli.

the Roman people of old as to their national destinies be satisfactorily solved. How far back such prophecies went—by what channels they were connected with the Primal teachings of God to Adam, and with the oral traditions of the Antediluvian Church—what coloring they assumed from the various religions through which they passed, are inquiries not within the scope of our present investigation. My statement is, that, except as heralding the religion of Christ, we have no record of prophecy as an element in any other religion whatever. This great mark of God is utterly wanting in each and all religions except Christianity. What we have in lieu of it in other religions are attempts at certain make-shifts for it, oracles, soothsayings, auguries, divinations, palmistry, haruspications, or direct efforts to open channels of communication with Satan and the powers of evil. But none has ever put forth a title to one written, recorded prophecy.

Inf. But I will observe again that you may have so drawn up your Creed, as to fit into it these multifold prophecies of the Scriptures. Pre-acquainted with the predictions, you may have invented a Messiah with life, incidents, and death to correspond in detail with them. Your Messiah would be cited to prove the truth of the prophecies, and your prophecies would be cited to prove the Messiahship of your Christ. The possibility of such a scheme you will, I suppose, admit.

Chr. Your supposition entirely overthrows Newman's statement, "that the Psalms can in no way be fixed on Messiah;" if they cannot, how could the Psalms or the other Scriptures have originated the idea

of a Messiah? This question, however, lies between Newman and you: we as Christians do not meddle with it. Either the prophecies of the Old Testament are sufficient to have formed in men's minds a strong, clear, broad outline of the future Messiah, or they are not. If they are, then Newman and the Infidels who aver they "can in no way be fixed on Messiah" are clearly in error. Now that they are sufficient is proved by the fact that all the nations to whom such prophecies are known concur in fixing them on the Messiah. If, on the other hand, they are not sufficient, how came such facts to be so concentrated in the life, death, and resurrection of a certain man, as to induce whole nations to affirm that these ancient writings are positively nothing less than representations in various forms of such life and death? How came the life and death of Jesus Christ to be such as to open up the Scriptures in an entirely new, yet as these nations believe, correspondent and harmonious sense from their commencement to their end? And how came they again with Him to cease and determine?

Inf. The difficulty is plain. Abolish Christ, the Scriptures, be they prophetical or not, are a cipher without a key. Abolish prophecy, the life of Christ as a fact believed in by half the world, Christian and Mohammedan alike, becomes a greater, not a less perplexity.

Chr. Infidelity would solve it, as Newman does, by ignoring the existence of Christ; by doing which he subverts his previous position of the non-Messianic character of the Scriptures. If Christ never existed, the whole Christian world has nevertheless, for

eighteen centuries, built up their faith on a Messiah—Christ or not—seen and found by them in the Scriptures. To affirm in the face of such a fact that the Scriptures are not thoroughly, and to their core, Messianic, would be to permit a few Infidels to deny what the world by its universal act on this very point, has for centuries witnessed and verified. If they are not Messianic to Newman, they ever have been, and still are, to the whole mind of Christendom. The world has formed and put together a Messiah out of the Scriptures. The Messiah, so built, has certain features of power and character universally assigned Him—suffering and sorrow on earth being a principal trait in all the delineations. This could not be, if the Scriptures were not, to the common-sense and reading of mankind, Messianic in the highest degree. Certain Jews in Palestine, before modern Christendom commenced, drew precisely the same picture of theirs, as modern Christendom does of its Messiah, from the same Scriptures. If Luke drew an imaginary Messiah, the imaginary one we draw from the same source, corresponds to his in every respect. If we both derive these images from Scripture, then there is something in the whole tenor of Scripture impressive of one and the same idea of the Messiah on both the Jewish and European mind; and that in periods of civilization differing in all things, but this idea, from each other. The existence of Christ can thus only be derived at the cost of exalting to a higher degree than Christendom itself has ever done the Messianic character of the Scriptures, for from this reasoning it would

result that they testified to Christ to such a degree that the world did not require a real Christ to substantiate their faith in such plenitude of testimony. This, indeed, is the only way Volney, an Infidel of less erudition but greater genius than Newman, can account for the universality of the recognition of the Messiah. "All the world, pervaded by these and other ancient writings, expected Him; some said they had seen Him: forthwith all the world believed them; the acquiescence was as profound as the expectation had been universal." Observe how one Infidel upsets the other.

INF. I side here rather with Volney than Newman.

CHR. The contradictory theories of Infidels on their own theme of Infidelity, would form an instructive volume.

INF. You have not, however, introduced, as I expected, the Omniscience of God to account for the fulfilment of Prophecy.

CHR. Omniscience must always to us be an abstraction. I do not build any truth on abstractions of the Deity. To me God is the personal God: He is Jesus Christ.

INF. Christians, I know, call him The "Word and Power of God." The "Word of God," applied to a living person, is a very strange expression.

CHR. Any "word" whatever is above inanimate or material nature, above mere animal nature. A "word" is not only something identically and inseparably one with reason, mind, spirit; but it constitutes also the power of the expression and impression upon others. Our present words in refer-

ence to our thoughts and their expression are a very faint, unsubstantial shadowing forth of what Christ is with reference to the almighty mind and its expression. His relationship to the Father in this respect is the original—we are only a human similitude of it. The Greek term, Ὁ Λογος του Θεου means not only the Word of God, but the Mind also, of which that Word is the expression and the power. That Word has come to us who are now its ruined and broken similitudes in embodied form—in Jesus Christ. He alone, therefore, is to us the Word, the Mind, and the Expression of God. Except in and through Him we know nothing of God except as a vacant abstraction.

INF. Do you mean that the Ὁ Λογος existed as such from eternity, in and with God, before it assumed Incarnation, as Jesus Christ, in this world?

CHR. Yes. "The Ὁ Λογος was made flesh, and dwelt among us."[1] The Incarnation of the Ὁ Λογος as Jesus Christ, took place eighteen centuries ago. The existence of the Ὁ Λογος as God, and with God, precedes creation: precedes all time: is from eternity.

INF. I understand now the immense significance your Church attaches to the term, "The Word of God," as applied to Jesus Christ. She thereby upholds Him as the Very God of Very God.

CHR. She holds Him to be, as the Scriptures say, Το πληρωμα της θεοτητος σωματικως—the Plenitude of the Deity in bodily form. To other intelligences the Ὁ Λογος may be Deity, otherwise than σωματικως: the expressions of the Deity, by and through the Ὁ Λογος of God, may be infinite in number and aspects

[1] John i. 14.

throughout the varied extent of the universe. But with that we human beings have nothing to do. To us He has come, and is apprehensible in Jesus Christ only. His oneness with the Child of the Virgin Mother is that Incarnation of Deity—both God and man—which we acknowledge Jesus Christ to have been, and still in heaven at this moment to remain. Such as that Incarnation is now in heaven we have faith that we too shall become. Other intelligences from other realms in the universe may in heaven be glorified in that form which it pleases the Ὁ Λογος to take upon Him in appearing among them: there may thus again be infinite forms of beauty and glory besides that which we of the race of Adam shall enjoy among the new creations of the Ὁ Λογος in heaven. With that again we have nothing to do. *Our* form of glory will be that of the glorified God-man, Jesus Christ. And in this Jesus Christ alone comes God to us now: in Him alone does He veil Himself: in Him alone does He unveil Himself to us: in Him alone does He permit us to see, feel, embrace, and dwell with Him. As in man only is there "soul" in this world, so in Jesus Christ only is there "God" in this world—whatever our souls possess of God passes to us through Him.

INF. You believe the Ὁ Λογος to be the medium of the action of the Supreme Being upon the whole universe—by its Incarnation as Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ became the Mediator between this world also and God. He was the union of the Ὁ Λογος with manhood. According to this view, Jesus Christ must of necessity be God.

CHR. Yes. The Ὁ Λογος being God, his Incarnation, by whatever name we call it, must be God. The only question, therefore, for faith is, was Jesus Christ the Incarnation of the Ὁ Λογος? I am obliged, by the deficiency of our English language, which uses "word" as something distinct from "reason, thought, or spirit," to go back to the Greek, but henceforth you will understand me to use the expression "Word of God" in the full Greek, not the mutilated English sense.

INF. Ah! then you conclude our English not in itself to be capable of the expression of Christianity?

CHR. The Saxon is utterly incapable of its expression. English is more Latin than Saxon, but when it desires to be precise and scientific, it immediately incorporates itself with the Greek. It pleased God to reveal his Gospel to us in Greek. Every scholar knows Greek to be the first of languages—to be that especial language which, above all others, defines the object by the word. We, in our English translation, utterly lose the Divine sense of the expression "Ὁ Λογος." To a Greek it would instantly convey the sense of every thing intellectual, mental, spiritual in God, appealing to all the same faculties in ourselves. The very expression was the introduction of a new supremacy. To us the fulness of that expression is lost.

INF. But you do not identify the correct knowledge of revelation with Greek and Latin.

CHR. All civilization hitherto has proceeded entirely in those two languages. If "The Times" newspaper attempted to-morrow to write a leading

article in mere Anglo-Saxon, it could not do it: it would discover that it was attempting to use sand for steel, the forms of barbarians to express the superiorities of a higher necessity. The test of mental civilization in an individual, or in a nation, consists in the use of one or other of those two languages for the expression of thought. Immediately we ascend above those animal necessities, which may be equally well expressed in Saxon, Hindostanee, Malay, Cherokee, or any savage tongue, we are violently flung back upon some dialect of that language in which the New Testament is written. Advocating, therefore, the translation of the Gospel into every tongue, I yet affirm the true understanding of that Gospel must be found in the tongue in which it pleased God to deliver it; nay more, that we shall never really civilize the world, till through such a translation we have brought every nation into either a Greek or a Latin form of thought-expression. This is no theory; it is broad, plain fact. Language is civilization; all civilization, humanly speaking, runs into one of the sister dialects of Greece or Rome. I find Christianity also revealed in that language: I am compelled to infer that, by this very fact, God has established a certain indissolubility between civilization and Christianity.

INF. But we English do not speak Latin.

CHR. We certainly speak more Latin than we do any other language. Take up any book now published: the language is three-fourths Latin or Latinized: for still higher accuracy or science, we go to Greek. Take up Milton, Shakspeare, Macaulay, Hume—

whatever the sentiments may be, the medium of communication is a branch of that language which God selected as the expression of his Gospel; and beyond it we find ourselves utterly inefficient to rise. Will you invent now a new word for a spiritual or even physical sensation?

INF. How—I can invent plenty of words.

CHR. No. Certain sounds you might attempt to impose on the world as words, as certain compositions are attempted to be imposed on the world as music—but no word defining any other than an animal want can you find, use, or impose, unless you derive it from what we usually call classical sources—Hebrew, Greek, or Latin. A new word is a new idea: to comprehend a new generic idea demands a new faculty; a new faculty can be given by God only: when a new language, therefore, with its new ideas, overspreads the globe, I know that such an effect can be produced by God only.

INF. I really do not see that language is so wonderful a thing.

CHR. Pray what is a "word?" You speak to me; I understand you: you speak to Westminster Palace; it is stone, magnificent stone, but neither hears nor answers; neither does the sun, the moon, or universe. Address yourself in words—the outpouring of your soul—to all creation; all creation flows on insensible as the river at your feet. But say one "word" to your little daughter in your arms—lo! how she responds, laughs, loves, and delights in your confidence, your address, your very notices of her: she is capable

of language, the universe is not. You have in your arms a nobler creature than all that universe, which can neither feel, hear, nor respond.

INF. A little child more wonderful than the whole material universe!

CHR. You know it is so: matter is nothing, the soul is every thing; of the soul, language is and must be the expression. Compare the Pyramids, St. Peter's Cathedral, the world, the order and adjustment of the material universe, which cannot respond to one spiritual impulse within you, to the little child which instantly responds to your own heart, life, and love; which says "my father" to you, and "our Father which art in heaven" to God. Is there any comparison between this child and the whole of what you Infidels deify as God—senseless, unconscious, wordless clay and stone nature? Can all nature speak one "word?" has it one affection? would it feel if you and all mankind perished most wretchedly to-morrow? No, it does not; a little child, an infant, has that in it which proves it to be of a higher architecture than all the material universe.

INF. A child, beyond all controversy, is a mystery; he may become a Robespierre or a Newton; a Voltaire or a Wilberforce; and there is something in him for which perhaps the whole material world is created.

CHR. The material world cannot, I think, "suffer?"

INF. Suffer, feel sense of pain?—of course not.

CHR. Then the very sense of "suffering" infers a

certain superiority over senselessness. But neither can it utter one syllable of language, it cannot speak?

INF. No.

CHR. All inanimate creation, all the nature which Infidels worship as God, cannot do that which your little child on your bosom, can, and from very instinct does do—turn to you, to your love, speak and confide in you—and you in the same love, by a thousand ways it cannot understand, express in a thousand different phrases of language your identity of heart and soul with it. Who meets you in your child?

INF. Ah! I see—nature, physical nature, cannot speak.

CHR. Your child does "speak," uses "words," your heart responds to them: you are in communication with all its lovely and heart-absorbing developments. Christ comes in and teaches this child the great truth in its nature; teaches its soul to believe, "I have a father in heaven as well as on earth; I am the child—far above insensible nature—of the God and Creator of nature." Would you oppose such teaching?

INF. Does Christ so come?

CHR. Drop theory, does He not? How does Christ come as a fact to the infants of this kingdom? By the sacraments of his Church, and those sacraments present Him as the Ὁ Λογος of God. Unless He is so, God does not receive them at all. He being God, it is God who receives them. Christendom has thus for centuries received Jesus Christ as verily and in-

deed the Ὁ Λογος of God, communicating Himself to us both in baptism and the eucharist. The child is therefore thus, what the material universe in all its grandeur cannot be, of God—the recipient of the Ὁ Λογος.

Inf. You do not then admit communion with God in any other way than through Jesus Christ?

Chr. I am not permitted to.

Inf. Not permitted to! How so?

Chr. Can you imagine it possible for any created being to have the power of approaching or knowing God in any other way or form than that in which it pleases God Himself to be approached? The Almighty may, for aught I know, have, through the boundless works of his infinitude, millions of aspects in which through the Ὁ Λογος He reveals Himself to other intelligences. To us He reveals Himself in one only: that one is Christ. He alone is to us Χαρακτηρ της Υποστασεως Θεου: in Him only, therefore, is it possible for me to know or be in communion with God. If I seek for God out of Christ, I am seeking Him where I am not permitted to.

Inf. I as an Infidel seek Him in Nature.

Chr. Is material nature susceptible of intelligence —above all, of the intelligence of God—of the Ὁ Λογος of God? Can it understand your words, heart, or mind, much less that of the Almighty? Has it sense, reason, or language either to receive or to communicate God or mind?

Inf. Certainly not.

Chr. How then can you find in nature what nature itself is incapable of receiving or expressing?

You may deduce this or that conclusion from the study of nature; so may I, so may any one; but these deductions are nothing after all but those of our own individual minds; nature herself emits neither voice nor language; she can say nothing about herself, far less a word about God. Being without mind, reason, or soul, I cannot see how nature can possibly express herself in any way to you about mind, reason, or soul, infinitely less of the mind, reason, and spirit of God.

INF. Granted; but nature, dead, dumb, and senseless herself, is nevertheless such a creation as enables my mind, without any revelation, to form a true idea of the God of nature.

CHR. We shall see that presently; suffice it now to observe, such an idea is at the best yours only. I may draw from the same nature a diametrically different idea of God; others may draw theirs different from, and condemnatory of both; thus, as was the case with the pre-Christian philosophers of Greece and Asia, nature is open to infinite interpretations of God, no God, Gods, multiplicity of Gods, every thing God, nothing God. I would request you to make a list of all the variations in Christendom in the interpretations of the Scripture, or the Church; I would then contrast these variations with the "ideas of God" derived from nature as contained, for instance, in Stanley's *History of Philosophy;* the former would be unity itself compared with the countless contradictions, all equally derived from or imputed to nature in the latter. Your "nature" has thus been searched, was for four thousand years

searched by men of high and acute intellect for God and religion—the result was, each investigator drew from it conclusions contradictory of the rest. We, on the other hand, point to all Christendom, not to philosophers only, but to the masses as one body united in one common conclusion of Creed derived from the Church and the Scriptures. Nature meanwhile being perfectly passive and inert, neither could nor ever has expressed herself to these philosophers of old, nor to any Infidel of modern times. The term "nature" is therefore, in this sense, your own impression only of things derived from certain present visibilities: it is you who say so and so—nature herself says nothing. When we, on the contrary, affirm the Scriptures say thus and thus, we put those Scriptures before your eyes; you read it thus and thus written; be these Scriptures true or false, you are obliged to admit both the writing and its plain unmistakable meaning. When you Infidels adduce nature, we require that nature to speak as plainly to us as these Scriptures do to you; but, lo! she is perfectly dumb, or speaks directly the contrary to us of what you affirm she speaks to you.

INF. But I understand you to go beyond this rejection of the material universe as capable of being to us the Ὁ Λογος of God, and to state that you desire to know nothing of God, except so far as He has veiled or unveiled Himself in Jesus Christ, "the Word."

CHR. God is everywhere, I know that; but in what Χρεια I know not. I am not to know. Everywhere I see his power and energizing, but I

do not everywhere see his mercy or his love, I see, on the contrary, very awful things—"terrors"—to be co-extensive with the action of his power. If I attempt to behold him unveiled in any way, but in Him who has become to us "the way, the truth, and the life of God," I know not in which of these aspects of terror I should meet Him. But of this I should be sure, that meeting Him thus in the way of Infidelity and disobedience, it would be the death and not the life of the soul.

INF. And for this reason you decline to build arguments on the abstract attributes of God, such as his omniscience?

CHR. They are terms of infinity not definable to, nor graspable by, my nature. God, I know, must be omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent,—but what omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence are, I know not. No finite faculty can know. How, therefore, can I reason with terms the meaning of which transcends both your nature and mine, human nature altogether.

INF. Does not the fact of prophecy proceed on the ground of the prescience of God?

CHR. Time is no element in God. "Pre," or "before," cannot in any way apply to Him as Deity. To creatures, the subjects of time, is it alone in strictness applicable. God knows all things "before" not relatively to Himself, but to us.

INF. Be it so. Such and such things were to come to pass; God foreseeing them—relatively to us—so revealed them beforehand; they came to pass: by which act we establish, in the ordinary ac-

ceptation of the terms, his prescience and omniscience. Is it not so?

CHR. I cannot accept your statement in its present form.

INF. But we are compelled to use terms of time in speaking of Deity.

CHR. Certainly, and terms of sense. But you cannot, I think, reason upon such terms upon the abstract attributes of Deity. In relativities between the Deity and man we must use terms of sense, space, and time,—man is not capable of other notions or conceptions than such as are represented in or by these Formatives of thought. But in reasoning on the Deity Himself, apart from the relativities of man and creation, all such terms being on the face of them inapplicable, must be rejected.

INF. Then, in fact, these terms not being applicable to the Deity as Deity, and we not being capable of any ideas but what are represented by such terms, we cannot reason about pure Deity itself at all.

CHR. We cannot. "Who by searching can find out God?" And this impossibility puts the axe summarily to the root of all Deism.

INF. How applied?

CHR. How can you, being capable of any other ideas than such as space, time, and the senses represent and convey, form any idea whatever of the Being to whom these originals of all your ideas do not and cannot in any mode apply? The Deity therefore of "Deism" must necessarily always be not a mere abstraction from all sense only, but one incapable of being represented to, as he is in

truth of being conceived by the human mind at all.

INF. I am sometimes impressed with that conviction myself.

CHR. Creation cannot supply us with any true symbol of the pure Deity; therefore God has solemnly commanded us never to presume either to take or to make any thing in heaven or earth as a "likeness of him." The "Nature" which Infidelity magnifies, so far from being God, is not itself in its vast universality in any way, kind, or degree, capable of supplying us with even "any likeness or true symbol of the supreme Deity." He is as utterly different from nature, from all the works of his hands, as the canvas is from the mind of the painter, or the stone is from the soul of the architect. Apart from Christianity men can have no definite or sensible idea, apart from Christ no sensible representative, of God. All other attempted ideas evaporate on being grasped at by the mind in vacuum and nothingness; they remind one of the Druidic tenet that the "Hollow" of the heavens itself was God—the older form of the Greek Dios, and the Roman Cœlum with its Diespiter or Jupiter. Would your Infidelity return to this primæval worship of nature?

INF. But the prescience of God is at any rate demonstrated by the truthfulness of prophecy.

CHR. Do you mean that God sees what will befall long before, relatively to man, it does befall?

INF. Thus I mean—God, foreseeing what is hereafter to happen, reveals it to certain men, who there-

upon speak it or commit it to writing: so spoken or written it is called "Prophecy;" this Prophecy, being the revelation ages before of events which, in the time assigned, really come to pass, is evidence of the prescience of God. So, at least, most of your modern writers on Christianity affirm and inculcate.

CHR. You are very earnest about this abstraction of Omniscience.

INF. Do not you concur in their view?

CHR. They may be right; but it is not my view, nor, I think, the teaching of the Scriptures.

INF. In what respect do you demur? Certain things are to come to pass: so far, clear. God in His Word foretells men that they are to come to pass; as He foretells, it so befalls;—does not that prove the foreknowledge of God as to future events?

CHR. All this logic is, to my mind, wrong, because anti-Scriptural.

INF. Give your own view, then.

CHR. The Word of God states that certain events shall come to pass: because the Word so states, therefore these events are certain to come to pass. The Word is the cause of the events it presignifies.

INF. The views are radically opposed.

CHR. Quite so. Your view makes "the Word" simply declarative; mine makes it causal and effective also of what it declares. Your statement would stand thus—"Because all these things were to be done, the Scriptures of the Prophets revealed them beforehand." Mine—"All these things were done

that the Scriptures of the Prophets might be fulfilled." And this latter is actually the way in which the Scriptures themselves deliver this statement.

INF. I had a cogent argument prepared upon the modern Omniscience view.

CHR. I suspected as much. Material Fatalism in men and things?

INF. Exactly.

CHR. And Prophecy merely the pre-announcement of fatalities which, prophesied or not, were to happen with or without the Word?

INF. Truly so.

CHR. And God, the mere revealer of the fatalities He could neither avert nor prevent—the Nuntius, the heathen Mercury, to man of some force or power above himself called Fate or Destiny? The Greek mythology revived of Jupiter and the Parcæ?

INF. And my argument would have been, I conceive, irrefutable. The admission by you of Prescience in this modern sense, would have destroyed the Omnipotence of God. If God foresees truly, that which He foresees must, of irrevocable necessity, happen: that very necessity destroys all power on his part of preventing or controlling the future—therefore his omnipotence.

CHR. And it is on such gross misconception as this of God, that Infidels conclude that God is not a Being to be prayed to by men. He is a God, they think, whose power is overruled by some chain of necessities or fatalities, some series of natural causes, which, in despite of Him, must and will hold on their course and law. Or if not this, He is a God who

ages ago has parted with his omnipotence; was at one time, but for some reason or other has long ceased to be, the Almighty. Something is above Him; and that something "hears not prayer."

INF. Well, such is one of our theories.

CHR. Certainly, if Material Nature be that something, it cannot, as we observed, do what those little children playing on the lawn do—"hear:" it can neither "hear" prayer nor any thing else. But do you hold such a thing as that to be above God? "He that made the ear, shall He Himself not hear? He that made the eye, shall He not see?" Matter itself neither sees nor hears; how then can it have made the ear and the eye, the hearing and the seeing in those children? Your argument, therefore, comes out thus: "Material Nature, the series of causes and effect, is superior to God; but this little child is evidently superior to all material nature, and therefore superior also to God." Is this "Intellect?"

INF. There may be other causes besides those connected with material nature, which render prayer an absurdity.

CHR. State them.

INF. To do so is beyond my knowledge; but this is clear, that if all nature be a series of unalterable causes and effects, no prayer can in the slightest degree produce a change in that series.

CHR. That is Material Fatalism, is it not?

INF. Yes. You must, if such theory be true, admit that to pray to it to change its course, is as ridiculous as to pray to the sun not to set, the light not

to shine, the night not to come, to man and beast not to die.

Chr. Perfectly so—quite as ridiculous. You, on the other hand, must admit that whether prayer be an absurdity or not, depends entirely on the truth or falsehood of this material fatalism being the Omnipotent God.

Inf. Why, yes, I think I must.

Chr. If this Power be one grade above insensible matter, it must at least have the faculty which even a brute possesses—that of hearing—it must be able at least to "hear." Must it not?

Inf. If it be aught above inert matter, I suppose it must.

Chr. If it can hear a prayer, is it able to grant it?

Inf. Certainly not—how could it without changing the whole unchangeable series of causes and effects?

Chr. Not being able to "grant" even one prayer, what becomes of its omnipotence? Is this the thing which, if not able to "hear," is lower than the brutes, if able to hear and not to grant, is more helpless than the brutes—for even a sheep will give its milk to the dumb beseechingness of the lamb—the great Power that, according to Infidelity, overrides and controls God? By your own reason, whatever it be, it is, at the best, as helpless as a stone in the air, which must come down to the earth: it can neither change aught in its own motion, nor effect the slightest change for good or evil in others. Why, Caliban is an Apollo of grace and energy to such a monstrous chimera as this God of Infidelity.

Inf. But if I admit that, whatever it be, it can

hear and grant, I entirely give up my position that prayer is an absurdity. If it be a power which *can* hear and grant, it *may* grant prayer and supplication; and if so, then also it may choose to make prayer and supplication to it, the very reason and condition why it pleases to do thus and thus. Prayer to it would thus be what you Christians hold it to be, of all services the most reasonable, as well as the most profitable, which can be rendered to God. If I make, therefore, even the first admission—that this Power can "hear"—I am dragged on by my own concessions to be at last a Christian, taking a Christian view of individual and national prayer.

CHR. Yes—your reason obliges you, against your will, to be herein a Christian.

INF. But if, on the contrary, I answer the first question, "can it hear?" in the negative, I must hold that this Power which does not permit God to grant prayers, is itself something inferior in organization to an ox or dog—which will never do.

CHR. Not until the gods of Egypt,—cats, calves, and crocodiles,—are to be the worship of England: for even these, you see, have senses superior to your "series of causes" Deity. Reconstruct Infidelity in any form you please, that form has already been encountered and ground into dust by Christianity; but this form of matter-worship is the lowest idolatry history records. Bring together the material universe —the sun, the moon, the stellar worlds—if worlds they be—the planets, the earth, clothe them in their aggregate with all their laws and properties in vestures of golden light, describe them in the fullest

and most gorgeous diction, surround them with the most glowing and brilliant coruscations of poetry, what in plain fact are they but such stuff as we every instant tread under foot, or use as subservient to the basest physical necessities of life? What is there nobler in a lump of dirt the size of our earth more than there is in that small lump yonder in your gardener's hand? Or in a collection of material light as vast as the sun more than in a taper? Or does magnitude alone, be it that of earth, air, fire, or water, constitute the idol of this kind of Infidelity? Ancient philosophy, which did worship the "Anima or Mens Mundi," the spirit which, as many thought, animated and was the vital power of the "moles" or material universe, recoiled from such senseless idolatry as the adoration of the "moles" itself; nevertheless this is the gross clay of which modern Infidelity would manufacture an image as gross as its material—without senses, feelings, affections, speech, reason, or soul, and place it as Fate or Destiny above the will and government of God. I grant to pray to such a thing as this would be the same as to kneel to and supplicate the stock of yonder tree. The poor heathen of old worshipped a part, modern Infidelity would worship the whole of this material world. I see not in what you differ, except in this, that he reduced his worship to bodily, while you confine it to intellectual, practice; but in both the cases the worship is literally that of the most despicable element in creation—inert matter.

Inf. We, as modern infidels, surely differ from those old stock-idolaters.

Chr. I do not see that you do a whit in the principle of your worship. The heathen selected some material object in nature—stone, wood, metal; he fashioned this into his idol: the idol was as its material—it could neither hear, see, feel, move, think, nor speak; yet this mass of brute matter, shaped by his own hands, the heathen set up, treated, and worshipped as God. Infidelity goes even further—for it would, by its own acknowledgment, put something above God which is, in every respect, the counterpart of this stone idol—something that cannot "hear" a single prayer, or respond to the throbbing of a single heart among the millions of mankind. Wherein, then, is the difference?

Inf. I never analyzed Infidelity by such a light as you are now applying to it.

Chr. Whatever your "Order of Nature" may mean, it must be something either living or dead, having or not having life. If it has no life, if it be merely the action of inorganic matter on matter, or the mere properties of matter in operation, such as gravitation, to suppose it in any sense God, much more above God, must infer mental idolatry of the same gross principle as that of the heathen. If it has life, it can—unless it be of the lowest order of life—"hear," and thus again you come to a starting-point which will inevitably conduct you to Christianity and Prayer. And as for "intellect" in this question—here is your Infidelity trying to persuade "the intellect" of man to regard as above God something that cannot do what every father in the world does to his child—hear its voice in prayer:

you would reduce "intellect" to the worship of such "matter" as this!

INF. But there yet remains immense difficulty connected with this question of Prayer.

CHR. What is it?

INF. If all things were from the first settled and ordained by Infinite Wisdom, such Infinite Wisdom would never, at the entreaty of such creatures as we are, alter aught in the scheme and succession of pre-established harmonies which it has thus decreed—and thus again we do not escape Fatalism. If there be such Fatality, such "an Order of Nature," resulting from either the properties of Nature itself, or imposed by a Power above nature and its properties, in either case it is clearly useless to pray; for this Fatality or Order must extend to the minutest as well as the most extensive operations and concerns of life and existence. Whether, therefore, the Supreme Power be vested in a dead or living cause of Fatality, the utter inutility of prayer—and with prayer, of all worship and devotion whatever—is demonstrated. How does Christianity solve such a knot as this—how can it reconcile its belief in the power of prayer to affect God, with its belief also that the whole series of causes and effects have been already immutably settled by the infinite wisdom of God?

CHR. We think our Faith in perfect harmony throughout with itself and Reason in this matter. We utterly reject all such infidel terms as Fatality, Destiny, Order of Causes, as would in the remotest degree imply that God is not now—at this very moment,

as He was from the beginning, and ever will be—absolutely and supremely Almighty. We deny all the principles and ideas intended to be conveyed by the above and similar terms: such denial forms a perpetual protest in the mouth of the Christian Church. The first article of our creed is, "that we believe in God the Father Almighty:" *now* as ever Almighty. Our Gloria in the Lord's Prayer is, "Thine *is* the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever." These and hundreds of like expressions of faith intimate that we utterly cast from us the notion that there is any destiny, fatality, necessity, but God Himself. He has never parted, never will part—to speak in human language—with his omnipotence over all things visible and invisible, matter and spirit, nature and grace, to any such mere phantasms and unrealities as Infidels create and name from the forge and coinage of their own brains. Christianity and Infidelity are on this point antipodes in time and eternity to each other. Time, as we said, cannot be applied to the Deity; there are no such measures of mortal flux as "past" and "future" in Him. All these theories, therefore, of Fatality and Immutability and Necessary Series, which proceed on the basis of "Time" as an element of God Himself, are to be rejected as false aud altogether repugnant to all true ideas of God. To Him there is nothing necessary; to creation He Himself is the only necessity. The whole order of nature is at His mercy: He has changed and destroyed it before: He will change and destroy it again: the universe can no more resist any action whatever of his

will, than the paper I now burn can this action of mine by which I burn it. He might, if He so pleased, abolish and cause creation to return to its original nothingness to-morrow. He will abolish it, as it now exists, and by the same omnipotence create it in an entirely unprecedented and more glorious form. And in all this there is no such thing as Time or Fatality to Him: from everlasting to everlasting He is alone "I AM"—The Almighty.

Inf. Supposing Him to be all this, why or how is it that He should be affected by human prayers? Why should He interfere with his own established order of causes and effects?

Chr. Rather, how know you that of this "order," prayer itself is not as great a law imposed on the soul as gravitation is on matter?

Inf. How know I?

Chr. Infidelity speaks of "causes and effects;" what these are it knows not; but it observes certain causes, apparently the most insignificant, produce certain effects the most extensive and momentous; both are in explicit language the subjects of the prophecies of Scriptures. All the "effects" of Christianity,—vast as they are politically and spiritually,—follow from one "cause," the Crucifixion. No other "series of causes and effects" is so plainly palpable. In the operation of this series, prayer, public and private, has always been a chief function; nevertheless, in total contradiction to your own theory, you cannot admit it to be a "cause" sure to produce certain "effects."

Inf But the order of the universe must yet be

something not changeable or to be affected by prayer.

Chr. Prayer to God is the order of the spiritual universe. For a soul not to pray to God is the same as for an atom not to gravitate to its centre. But let us consider it from another point of observation in your theory. Christianity is the "effect" of a certain cause,—"the crucifixion of Christ,"—is it not?

Inf. It is so.

Chr. We have, then, a series, the links of which from one cause extend through eighteen successive centuries of effects. We know of no series in mental, spiritual, or social history either so clear or important as this of the progression of Christianity.

Inf. And your inference.

Chr. If "the series of cause and effects" constitute God, or a Destiny which controls God, Christianity itself, as far as we have data to proceed upon, is in this world the principal part of such series; and consequently prayer, a principal part of Christianity, must be part also of that supreme order and law which constitutes God and rules the universe. For you cannot separate prayer from Christianity, nor Christianity from "the causes and effects" of eighteen, more correctly, fifty centuries in the history of our race and world. Thus without any reference to God you are compelled by your own theory of Infidel materialism to admit the fact of "prayer" as part of that law of causes and effects which you would substitute for God—as the thing to which the universe bows and obeys. And this too, mark you, as of necessity: the universe has no alternative in your theory but a

passive submission of itself to that "series of causes and effects" of which in the strongest, longest, and most indissoluble series we know, prayer is the greatest cause of the greatest effects. Christianity teaches the state of prayer to be the right state of a creature towards its Creator; the effects of it remain entirely within God's hands, but Infidelity by the above theory renders its effects over the material universe itself absolutely irresistible. An infidel ought surely to be always "praying," always producing marvellous "effects" by this cause. Why does he not?

Inf. Because he knows such effects would not inevitably follow.

Chr. Then what becomes of your theory of the immutable series of causes and effects apart from God? It clearly has no existence: apart from God, cause and effect do not and cannot exist; of Him only is it that cause is cause, or effect, effect; and again at his will or word cause ceases to be cause, and effect, effect. Of the truth of this doctrine we hold the miracles of our Lord to be incontestable evidence. To Him all causes and effects, material or immaterial, became just what He pleased. Attraction, gravitation, life, death, production, ceased or acted at his pleasure.

Inf. And we who are Infidels hold such suspension, destruction, or superseding of nature and its laws, of matter and its properties, impossible.

Chr. And we Christians hold such not to be only possible, but the antagonistic idea to be subversive of all true conceptions of Deity. Nature and matter

have no other law whatever than the will of their Creator. Christ did what He pleased with them, does so still, and ever will so do by the mere word of his power.

INF. And you believe God often overrules nature in answer to prayer.

CHR. I cannot comprehend what you mean by "overruling" that which, having no sense, consciousness, or volition of its own, can neither be rule or law to itself. Here is a stone; you take it up and cast it into the river. Is the "nature" of that stone overruled by your action?

INF. Its nature is to be purely passive in the action.

CHR. And if you burnt it to powder it would be just as passive. So is it with all material nature, the whole universe, under the power of God. But this power being, not like yours, limited, but infinite, extends itself over every form, phase, law, quality, and property equally, as over all the material itself of nature and the universe. And of this Infinite Power the volition alone is creation or annihilation. But equally in yours as in his hands, the mere matter itself has no volition of its own, and therefore cannot be "overruled."

INF. Well, then, let us change the phraseology. Does the volition of God in answer to prayer so act upon nature as to cause it to bring about the state, event, or emotion prayed for?

CHR. According to our Christian faith, constantly. And we think such faith most reasonable. Is it not the object of every civilized man, whatever his pro-

fession, trade, or art may be, to make nature and all its resources subservient to the use, welfare, and happiness of man?

Inf. Certainly.

Chr. Christians believe nature to have been for this very purpose created of God. Subdue the earth, subdue all matter, subdue all nature, was his first command. Civilization is thus the handmaid of God over nature. When we pray to God He may answer us according to his pleasure, either by dispensing with nature, or through the medium and operation of nature. Nature, acting according to his volition, would be only fulfilling the original design of her creation. We in praying should be only applying ourselves to obtain from God the happiness for which we were at first designed by Him, and of which nature was designed to be the material medium: so far from being forced, "overruled," interfered with, suspended, nature would be doing the very thing and none other than what she was created to do. To us Christians, believing this view of the respective provinces of God, man, and material nature to be the only true and rational one, prayer is in the most perfect accord with nature and its whole plan, with the ineradicable instincts of the soul, with the love and omnipotence of God.

Inf. And you suppose that God has often thus made the operations of nature for good or bad in the land, dependent on the public prayers and worship of its people.

Chr. It appears to me most reasonable that it should be so. Nature was made for man, man for

God. No further was nature intended to serve man than as man is the servant of God. If man withdraws himself from that service, God withdraws the blessings of nature from him, which appears to me most just. Thus prayer is the fulfilment, the neglect of prayer the violation, of the whole design and system of nature. Our right connection with nature as our material minister cannot be preserved except by preserving also our right connection with God as his spiritual ministers. The golden chain which binds us in love to God being riven, the iron chain wherewith we bind nature breaks beneath us or drags us to the earth captives to our slave.

Inf. Then you do not allow, on this question, the accuracy of such terms as "violation of natural laws," "suspension of ordinary powers?"

Chr. No: for nature has no other law or power than the alone will of God; and it appears to me a self-evident absurdity to think of nature in any other light than of being dependent, from moment to moment, for its very existence, much more for its properties and qualities, on God. Infidelity concedes that the First Cause—if it be aught above brute matter—must be able at least to do what millions of its creatures do, "hear" and grant prayer. It must grant them either through the medium and agency of nature, or not. If it be through the agency, control, and direction of natural means, nature is only made to work out the original design of her Creator. If prayer be granted, but not through nature, then you must admit the principle, also, of the whole supernatural system of Christianity.

INF. You, if I understand aright, maintain both.

CHR. Yes. I hold that the Supreme Being grants us the object of our prayers, according to his pleasure, by either natural, preternatural, or supernatural means. Prayer, being the law of the soul, brings both us back to our original position towards God, and nature to her original position towards us. The physical happiness and exaltation of a nation appear thus to me indissolubly connected with its moral or immoral, its religious or irreligious, character. And I contend that all the facts of history support this view. I am not speaking of prayer, be it observed, as a thing separate from, but as a co-operant of duty. The cholera, for instance, menaces us with a visitation. Certain sanitary duties must be undertaken and discharged. But to proceed to discharge and rely upon them, without any acknowledgment of that Supreme Being by whose will alone means are means, and duties duties, seems to me the acme of unreasoning folly. It would be great folly to pray only, leaving the duties undischarged; but it is greater folly to go to work as if the means were themselves God—absolutely and infallibly effective of success, by some innate potency in themselves independent of God. It would be great folly, again, when God has already placed the means of removing evil in our power, to have recourse, time after time, to prayer against the recurrence of that very evil, the means of removing which He has already placed at our disposal. The object of such prayer would, in such cases, have been already granted—and that through the agency of natural means in our own

hands. Nature, in these and similar instances which abound in history, is the talent which God has already given into our hands, but which those very hands wilfully and slothfully bury in the ground—then immediately after are stretched out again to heaven, to ask for more talent, which, if granted, would in such spirit meet the same fate. I am not speaking of prayer thus abused into a substitute for work, duty, or knowledge. What I affirm is, that these works or duties have no virtue, or power of success in them, beyond so far as it is the pleasure of God to attach it to them. And that if the acknowledgment, by prayer and public worship, of this truth be withdrawn by a nation, God forthwith, in innumerable instances, withdraws all virtue from the means. They cease to be means, because we have ceased from Him by whose pleasure alone they are means.

Inf. God thus regulates nature towards man, as man regulates himself towards Him.

Chr. On a national scale, yes. For nations, as such, cannot be judged in the next world; they must be, therefore, and always are, judged in this world. The individuals, on the contrary, of which nations are composed, are not judged in this world; their judgment takes place in the next. On the good and evil individually, God causes the same sun to shine, and the same blessings of nature to flow in this world. On the good and evil collectively, or as States, He acts in this world, either in their national capacity, surrounding and endowing them with national blessings, or uprooting them as a nation, and

making their land "perpetual desolation." Thus the judgment of God on the Jews, as a nation, lies upon them in this world. His judgment upon them individually, for salvation or perdition, does not lie upon them in this world, but is reserved for Jesus Christ in the next. Similarly with us. God deals, and will deal, with Britain as a nation in this world, accordingly as, in her national collectiveness, she regulates her life and conduct towards Him; but Britons, individually, will be judged hereafter, not now.

Inf. In this view you render it impossible for an Infidel to be a good subject or citizen. For a "nation" being composed, as you observe, of individuals, the national prosperity must depend on the right observance, by each individual, of his religious obligations towards God.

Chr. Certainly: for which reason there lies a responsibility on every individual in the nation to see that the nation or state, of which he is a subject, does discharge, as a state or a nation, its duties towards God. I consider thus an Infidel Englishman, who neither has conscience himself, nor cares that the State should have conscience, towards God, to be the worst possible enemy to the temporal prosperity and welfare of England. He cannot, it is true, bring down a spiritual judgment on one soul individually, but he does all he can to bring down temporal judgment on England nationally—for as a nation God deals with her now, in time, not in eternity. I regard, therefore, the man who neglects the religious ordinances of common prayer and public worship, as not only a pernicious member of society in the abstract,

but to the extent of his individual influence and power a positive enemy and cause of adversity to his own country and countrymen. In his degree and sphere he sets an example which would, if universally followed, produce—and that by processes perfectly natural—dissolution, ignominy, and ruin on the land and its people.

Inf. You must concede that such an entire subordination of nature to spiritual ends is not to be easily believed.

Chr. No: I cannot concede it—on the contrary, my reason cannot conceive why nature should have been created at all, or why her existence should be continued for a day, except for the sake, and in subservience to spiritual and sensitive Intelligences. The universe of Material Nature has no consciousness of its own existence, has it?

Inf. No.

Chr. Nor of any properties, motions, or realities in itself or its elements?

Inf. Certainly not.

Chr. It is clear, then, it was not created for itself. The idea, indeed, that matter was systematized, and put into its present forms and order, merely to roll, and roll, and roll by gravitation and repulsion in one eternal unconscious monotony of time and motion, carries its own refutation with it. We may as well imagine the rock, the grass, or the river to have been created for the sake of their own material unconscious selves. That a thing which cannot feel should be created for its own sake, infers, to my mind, strong absurdity. Yet Infidels talk and write as if there

really was some vast consciousness of order and sense of regularity in these inert masses themselves: as if the sun, the earth, the atmosphere were animated by a living principle of conscience, which rendered the slightest deviation from their course of duty not for a moment to be tolerated as a possibility in nature. And they have invented, and persist in using, a certain set of words and phrases, intended to impress the mind with a belief that man—spiritual, intelligent, immortal man—is a mere slave and dependent on what they call the "laws" of this dead stuff: that he is made for it, not it for him: and that to ascertain what these "laws" are, is the highest knowledge of which he is capable. I, for my part, hold that if only one single soul, capable of that which all material nature is not capable of—enjoying and suffering—existed in the world, the continuance, the wreck, or reconstruction of all nature would, in right season, depend on how far it did or did not subscribe and contribute to the necessities or desires of that one soul. What is all this senseless nature, that it should be put into comparison or competition with the nature of even one sensitive being? If a dog were the only sensitive being in the world, it would be most rational that the non-sensitive world should have been so ordered as to be in all things conducive to his being and well-being. Now this nature was created to be more entirely the plastic slave of man as inert matter, than the dog or any other creature, to be his animal slave—yet Infidelity magnifies it, and certain properties in it termed its laws,—the laws of a lump of earth, or a

current of wind, or a blaze of fire!—into an immutable sovereignty over the destinies of sense, intelligence, and soul.

INF. Man, however, cannot alter these "laws" or properties, tendencies, and effects of the material universe.

CHR. No: for the universe, with its matter and properties, is not his, but God's. But he can, as you know, direct and control them to an almost indefinite extent; but what he does and is doing more and more every day as he progresses in peace, science, and civilization—does for his own comfort, for pay, for money, for speculation,—does in steam, in fire, in every element from electricity to iron,—is, according to Infidelity, quite out of the power of God to do in any way for him. Man may direct the lightning, but God cannot—may produce abundant harvests, but God cannot: man can give or destroy life in tens of thousands, but God cannot

INF. But man does all this by and through nature.

CHR. And cannot God? Does man "violate," or only discover and apply to his own purposes, the powers of nature herein? Cannot God also thus use nature for his purposes towards man? On the very lowest supposition this power must be conceded: and with it again you concede the reasonableness of prayer by man to the God of nature. Let me ask you this question: Which is more dear to you, your children or the furniture of your house? Is the furniture for the family, or the family for the furniture? But all the arguments of Infidelity about nature and man proceed on the gross assumption that the sense-

less furniture of the senseless house is something both more powerful in itself, and more precious in the sight of God, than the happiness and souls of his own immortal children. For the sake of your children you would alter this and that in your house at your pleasure: in doing so, you would never dream that you were "violating" any immutable series of causes and effects in your furniture—nor would you be; you would only be treating matter as matter, as God made it to be treated—as He Himself, by his word or will, treats all the universe of matter and its properties. The good of the least of your little children would be sufficient to induce you to change the whole material arrangement of your nursery, your garden, your grounds. But God, exclaims your Infidelity, cannot thus consult the good or the happiness of his children, though they draw near to Him with full and earnest hearts on bended knees; and why not? Because something or other in the senseless inert matter of the universe—the furniture of his house—prevents Him from doing for his children what the same matter cannot prevent any mortal father in his own house from doing for his children. My judgment revolts from such "intellectual Infidelity," as no sooner expressed than self-condemned. One human being is more dear to God than all the universe of unconscious material nature; the prayer of even one such is never unheard; whether graciously granted, or graciously and in mercy denied, or how granted, naturally or supernaturally, is God's province, not the supplicants. The act of prayer itself is of all others the most truly natural and

rational in which a human being can be engaged towards the great First Cause and Sovereign Disposer of the Universe. Among other blessings attendant on it, it disperses from the soul all the impious nonsense and folly connected with such systems of material fatalism as we have been discussing.

Inf. Well, then, I now revert to prophecy again; and it appears to me that on these very principles which you enunciate, Prophecy and Fatalism are identical. Unless there be a predestined order of events, or a system of fatalities, how can there be prophecy, which is in fact the prediction of that which is "fated" to happen? How can you separate one from the other?

Chr. We have already, I think, rejected all fatality or necessity as proceeding from matter. Now what is the origin of the expression "fate?" "Quod fatur Deus." "That which God speaks." The "Fata," therefore, according to the sense of the old world, were nothing else than what it pleased God to speak —the "Words" of God. Infidelity in the existence of God corrupted that sense, and absurdly connected "Fate" or "the Word" with material nature, which is totally incapable of one "word" or sensible sound. Now if we bring back "Fate" to its original acceptation of "the Word of God," then we should agree that whatever this Word or Fate of God has spoken or decreed, must happen. This is the only "fate" Christianity acknowledges, and it is you see the only "fate" also of which through language we can form any positive idea. To us, through Christ, the word of God is the only fate; now how came the heathen

world to call the power thus indicated by the same name as we do "the Word?" They either reasoned such power up to this source themselves, or it is the definition of such power which the great community of the human heart and mind itself suggests, or all heathenism whatever,—being the corruption of that faith which "was from the beginning,"—retained of necessity in ordinances, beliefs, names, more or less of the truths of that faith,—among others, that that power which causes all things to come to pass is the "Fate or Word of God." Any one of these suppositions condemns the irrationality of Infidelity, and confirms the verity of Christianity. The simple expression "Fate," "the Word," implies a power of which material nature is not capable. Thus the terms themselves which Infidelity would pervert to its own purposes prove, on examination, destructive to its very foundations. It desires to aggrandize material nature under the aspect of "Fate," but "Fate" when applied to spurns such connection, and proclaims itself the power and expression of something quite distinct from, and supreme over matter.

Inf. I understand then your position with reference to prophecy to be this,—the Word itself is the cause why the things it predicts come to pass.

Chr. Yes.

Inf. The word of prophecy being once gone forth, all things thenceforth and for that reason—because it is "the Word"—are made by the living Word Himself, Jesus Christ, so to work together as to fulfil and verify it.

Chr. Such is my view. The Word is the cause of

the events, the power by which such events are caused; not any "fatality" in events the cause of the Word itself, or of the Word being revealed.

Inf. Let us see. Christ suffered death by Crucifixion. Was He to be by any "fatality" in events, crucified, and the word of prophecy therefore given; or "the Word" once gone forth that Crucifixion was to be the mode of his death, therefore He was crucified? You hold the latter view?

Chr. I do.

Inf. Then you do hold that whatever this "Word" has gone forth upon is what I mean by "Fate"—an event which must come to pass—only with you it is God, and proceeds from God only: the expression itself implying a power of which physical or material nature is itself entirely incapable. You make "Fate" solely that will of God which by its own Spirit expresses, and by its own power fulfils itself; the expression or prophecy and the verification being thus of necessity, as being both operated by one God, in perfect accordance with each other.

Chr. Exactly so.

Inf. I admit the consistency of this view, but see! it holds within it still a certain species of fatalism.

Chr. Provided you admit "Fate" to be nothing else than the will of God in operation, I do not see how it can be otherwise.

Inf. True. As thus—what the Word of God has once expressed, God himself has no power to change; the Word of God binds God Himself to its fulfilment.

Chr. Admitted; the Word of God is, I repeat, the only "must be" we Christians hold: beyond or ex-

traneous to it we repudiate all and every "must be" with God or in creation.

Inf. What! the omnipotence of God is bound to his Word!

Chr. Yes, is one with his Word. And so far as all things created are concerned, his Word is not only the expression but the co-instantaneous action of his omnipotence. "Let there be light," that was "the word:" with the word there was light; that was omnipotence, but the word and the omnipotence being one went forth as one. "I will, be thou whole;" that was the word, with the word the effect is co-instantaneous; wholeness is created. "This is my body; this is my blood;" that is the word: the Word, being omnipotence, effects itself: the bread co-instantaneously with the Word becomes, by the omnipotence of the Word, that which the Word expresses it to be; Christ is thus, as the Scriptures declare Him to be, both the Word and—as being the Word—the Power also of God.

Inf. But Christianity herein methinks assumes the province of philosophy, and very profound philosophy too.

Chr. Certainly, as we believe, the only true philosophy. Philosophy, as you are well aware, is not wisdom, but the love and appreciation of wisdom; to us Jesus Christ, the Word and the Power, is also the Wisdom of God. To love and appreciate Him is, as St. Paul expresses it, "wisdom in the highest," the best and purest philosophy of which the human intellect is capable. Now that the action of the power of God is simultaneous with his word is, I think,

clear to reason. How did God at first, for instance, create matter? It was not, as we may say, with hands.

Inf. Of course not.

Chr. Nor yet by, or with, material agencies, for He could not act with matter, when as yet there was no matter to act with.

Inf. Equally plain.

Chr. We are driven back upon something then entirely in God Himself as the first cause of matter. Whatever it be, its coming forth from God, its first action, could only take place by the will of God Himself. That which did thus come forth of God, very God of very God, being both the will and power of God to create all things out of nothing, Christianity terms "the Word" or Ὁ Λογος of God, which Word, Incarnate, is Jesus Christ. By this "Word" alone, "whose goings forth," as Micah states, "are from everlasting"—were matter, the universe, all things whatever created.

Inf. But is this an inference from Scripture, or plain Scripture itself?

Chr. Plain Scripture itself—plainer than the inference—but the expressions of Scripture are become so familiarized, that to draw attention to the plain meaning and sense of Scripture we are often obliged to put their sense before people as nearly as we can in other terms. The philosophy, as you call it, which alone to my mind solves the origin of creation is expressed in the plainest possible terms by St. John. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in

the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was nothing made that was made. And the Word was made flesh."[1] Now unless matter made itself, this statement of its origin and creation is, I will venture to affirm, the only one approving itself to right reason which has ever been presented to the world. God, not creating by material hands of his own, nor by material agencies, matter not yet existing, it follows that creation must have been effected by the "Word" of God: it equally follows that the Word itself being thus the creative power, creation itself must of necessity be simultaneous with the Word. Now our Christian faith is that Jesus Christ is this incarnate Word of God; and such faith we thus confess in the Nicene Creed, "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-Begotten Son of God, Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten not made—By whom all things were made."

Inf. I well know with what a high hand the Church has always carried the absolute divinity of its Founder, on which point I shall presently deliver my sentiments. I confess, however, that there is much greater depth as well as sublimity in what I will persist in terming the "philosophy" of Christianity and the Scriptures, than I was at all prepared to combat. But how does the fact of Christ being the Power as well as Word of God bear on our present subject of prophecy?

Chr. The Word being also the power of God is the

[1] John i.

cause in all things, prophecy included, of its own fulfilment. The Scripture is the written expression of the Life-Word, Jesus Christ. Every prophecy thus written, being thus part of the Word itself which is God, carries with it its own creative power. The subject of it must under the power of the Word as necessarily come into existence, as under the power of the same Word matter itself, the light, the sun, the earth, man came out of the dust or out of nothing into existence. Every thing therefore on which this Word has gone forth must come to pass; for to this Word, the power of God, both being one, is indissolubly bound. All other things whatever on which the Word has not gone forth remain as from the beginning at the absolute disposal of God to change, modify, or annihilate at his pleasure. The Scriptures thus contain to us the revelations of those things on which the Ὁ Λογος of God has gone forth. These cannot be in one iota changed by God Himself till "all be fulfilled," for, as St. Paul expresses it, it is impossible for God to deny Himself; and this Himself the Ὁ Λογος is. The will of God cannot be contrary to itself, nor to the expression of itself as the "Word." So far, therefore, as the Word has spoken, there is "Fate:" the Scriptures are the revelations of this "Fate." As out of "Christ" there is no "fate," or word of God, so out of the Scriptures can there exist no revelation or science of fate whatever. For on all things else the "fate" or word of God has not, as far as we know, gone forth; on these things it has. And these therefore are those things which, out of this world and the next, out of time and eternity, must be veri-

fied by the truth, and substantiated by the omnipotence of God. And in them all, and their fulfilment, there is no element of time to Christ as the Ὁ Λογος: for time, as we said, is no element of God; but there is the element of time in them to the man Jesus who by the incarnation of the Ὁ Λογος became the Christ or the God anointed: to us also who are in our bodies the extension of Jesus, as the incarnation of the Ὁ Λογος, and in our sanctified souls of the Ὁ Λογος in Jesus, time is an element. With reference to ourselves, therefore, we use the terms "predestination," "foretold," "prophecy," and such like: with reference to God we reject them as inapplicable to a Being in whom neither creation, nor matter, nor any form, property, or quality of matter has, or can have, part or inherency.

Inf. This statement, which makes Jesus Christ the only "fate," "destiny," or "necessity" to man, utterly explodes the idea of any inherent power in material nature to produce events in future; it removes man, as a spiritual being, entirely beyond the powers or chances of any thing below God.

Chr. It does so. And moreover, while Infidelity cannot give us the remotest idea of what it means by its "fate," or its "predestined order of causes," or what such order, with reference to man as an intelligent and spiritual being, will be in ten or twenty years, Christianity places the written Book of true "fate" to the very moment, and beyond it, of the consummation of this present order of nature in the hands of every believer. And in so doing, enables him to place himself at once by faith in

entire harmony of life and soul with the purposes of God: such "Fate" becomes to him merely the "order" of his own salvation, and of the restoration of all things in Christ: with such order he rejoicingly works: by obeying Him from whom it proceeds he commands futurity itself: for knowing what such futurity will be "by the Word," "by the Word" also which calls, incorporates, and engraces him with itself, he is already exalted above all its evil, and spiritualized for all its good. Christ, the Christian's "Fate," revealed to him, becomes his salvation: if in the "order of events" issuing from Christ the Word, there is in futurity such a "Fate" as hell, he, by becoming one with Christ, forever escapes it: if such a "Fate" as Heaven, he forever gains it. The revelation, then, of Christ, places, in one sense, every man's "Fate" in his own power. Every man is called to be one with Him by the Word: every man by such Word, effective of itself, is made capable of coming and of being made one with Christ: every man has it put into his own power to be, if he please, in Christ, the Word, the will, and the power of God, as to himself—the master of his own fate, and the arbiter of his soul's destinies. Here the reason of revelation and of prophecy, the truth of God's ever-present power upon man, and yet the freedom of man's will by the same power of God, in the matter of his own salvation and perdition, are practically in every man, in every hour of every day, reconciled and combined.

Inf. I deduce from this statement that you believe the whole world to be moving at this moment by the word of prophecy.

CHR. By every word that has proceeded out of the mouth of God.

INF. And you admit no other "Fate," or "fatalism?"

CHR. None.

INF. Nor any, as of necessity, series of causes and effects, as existing out of the Word.

CHR. How is it possible if, as we said, by the Word only things are created and do subsist, any one cause or effect, let alone any series, should, "except by the Word," come into existence at all?

INF. And this Word, which called present Nature into existence, having also declared that it shall cease to exist, its destruction is as certain as its existence—both being bound up in the same "Word."

CHR. Yes.

INF. Whatever also that "Word" has gone forth upon, to that the whole Deity is committed—Nature itself being so regulated as in all things to subserve "the Word." Now this, I apprehend, is what we call "Supernaturalism," is it not?

CHR. As you please: I will not answer for names; but Nature itself is, next to Christianity, the most supernatural thing I know.

INF. Nature supernatural! What a paradox.

CHR. Not at all, I conceive. Whatever owes its origin to something above Nature, must be supernatural. Nature owes its origin, not to itself, but to something prior to and greater than itself: it is therefore itself one vast confederation of the evidences of supernaturalism. Not a single operation is there in Nature which was not originally

called into action by a power above and preceding Nature. The difference is that Nature is the transient, Christianity the permanent, form of supernaturalism. Nature as it is will dissolve in the Church of God as it will be—God, who is above the Church, and above all Nature now, will still be forever above the two in one then. Nature thus, as it began in the "going forth," so it will end in the "Word" of God fulfilled.

Inf. One of Newman's most formidable objections hinges, it appears to me, upon the epithet the "Word of God." Here is his statement:[1]

"One of the most decisive testimonies to the Old Testament which the New contains is in John x. 35, where I hardly know how to allow myself to characterize the reasoning; the case stands thus. The 82d Psalm rebukes unjust governors, and at length says to them, 'I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.' In other words, 'Though we are apt to think of rulers as if they were superhuman, yet they shall meet the lot of common men.' Well: how is this applied in John? Jesus has been accused of blasphemy for saying that 'He and his Father are one.' And in reply He quotes the verse, 'I have said, Ye are gods,' as his sufficient justification for calling Himself the Son of God: 'for the Scriptures cannot be broken.' I dreaded to precipitate myself into shocking unbelief if I followed out the thoughts that this suggested."[2]

[1] Phases of Faith, p. 76. [2] Ibid. p. 61.

Thus far Newman. I understand him to imply that Christ, being accused of blasphemy for calling Himself in a sole peculiar sense "One with God," prevaricated from his real meaning by quoting a verse from Scripture, in which He knew the title "God" to be applied in quite a different sense to princes and rulers. He used the term "One with God" at first in one sense—meaning that He Himself was very God: and so the Jews understood him, and charging Him at once with blasphemy in thus making "Himself God," took up stones to stone Him to death—whereupon Christ, shrinking from this death by lapidation, defends the term He had used by quoting to them a verse in their own Scriptures in which it occurs—but occurs in quite another sense to that in which He had applied it to himself. If this view be correct, was not Christ here guilty of prevarication?

Chr. The view is altogether erroneous, and Newman here, as in other portions of his writings, by no means shows that knowledge of Scripture for which he has hitherto received credit. Let us examine the narrative of the facts themselves in St. John. Jesus Christ, at the Feast of the Dedication, was walking in Solomon's Porch in the Temple at Jerusalem. The Jews surround and accost Him, "How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus does tell them plainly, "I and my Father are one." They menace Him with instant death for blasphemy, "because He, being man, made Himself equal with God." Jesus, referring them to their own Scriptures in which God Himself had called

those to whom "the Word of God" came—God's "children of the Most High," demands if they dare say of Him, "the Living Word of God Himself thus come," sent and sanctified by the Father, a blasphemer, because He calls Himself the Son of God? And He immediately, with greater emphasis and authority, repeats the "blasphemy"—"Know and believe that the Father is in me and I in Him." Whereupon the Jews again attempted to seize Him, "but He escaped out of their hands."

The question asked was, "Art thou the Christ?" Jesus tells them plainly, in the Scriptures, He is: they charge Him with blasphemy; He answers "God calls those to whom the Christ—the Word—is sent, children of God." Christ Himself, therefore, the sending of whom "makes them the children of God," must be God; for how could they become the children of God, if the "sent" whom they received was not Himself God, one with the Father? I am that Christ—that "sent" of the Father—the Messiah—one therefore with the Father: the Father is in me, and I in Him.

I see nothing here but the straightest action, the highest courage, the most unanswerable argument. Christians are now the children of God; what makes them such? The Christ—the Word sent. He who being received makes us by such reception of Himself children of God, must needs Himself be God. If He is not, then are not we the children of God, and the Scriptures, which calls us such in Him, are "broken"—which to the Jew of old, and to us now, is simply an impossibility, and Christ was speaking

to the Jews in the very same language and to the same purpose as He now speaks with to us.

Inf. Newman certainly does not seem to have made himself master of his data in this case. The reasoning and conduct of Christ herein appear straightforwardness and intrepidity themselves.

Chr. Newman has abandoned Orthodoxy. He has probably ceased to see Christ in the Scriptures at all: he could see nothing of Christ, perhaps, in the Psalm itself.[1] "Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations." Nor would he admit that when we are made members of Christ, we of necessity become children of God, because Christ, of whom we are part, is God. To us, however, in the Church, the Psalm, its quotation by Christ, and the irrefragable proof it supplies to us of His Godhead, are so in unison with the whole doctrine of the Church, and its interpretation of the Scriptures, that we never could have made Newman's construction out of it, or read the narrative in St. John as he seems to have done.

Inf. I advance to another very serious charge against the morality of your Scriptures. In page 91 of "Phases of Faith" Newman writes, "Hosea was divinely ordered to go and unite himself to an impure woman. Could I possibly think that God ordered *me* to do so if I heard a voice in the air commanding it? Should I not rather disbelieve my hearing than disown my moral perceptions? It must be morally right to believe moral rather than sensible perceptions. No outward impressions on the eye or

[1] Ps. lxxxii.

ear can be so valid an assurance to me of God's will as my inward judgment.

CHR. Surely your Infidel has here turned into a downright Roman Catholic, has he not?

INF. How so?

CHR. Is not the principle which he here lays down —that the senses are no judges in the things of the soul—the very principle in his brother's religion on which the whole system of Transubstantiation is founded? Read it thus—"Should I not rather disbelieve my hearing than disown my spiritual perceptions? It must be spiritually right to believe spiritual rather than sensible perceptions. No outward impression on the eye or ear, can be so valid an assurance to me of God's will as my spiritual judgment." His brother would add, "that such spiritual judgment —such spiritual perception was borne out and sanctioned by the express letter of Scripture, 'This is my body—this is my blood.'" But this religion, which thus sacrifices the senses to internal intuitions, moral or spiritual, is that very faith of which Francis Newman has thus expressed himself: "For the peculiarities of Romanism I feel nothing, and I can pretend nothing but contempt, hatred, disgust, and horror—a system of falsehood, fraud, unscrupulous and unrelenting ambition."[1] Yet he here adopts as his own, the strongest, perhaps, of all the "peculiarities" of Romanism. "No outward impression on the senses can be so valid an assurance to us of God's will, as something inward—be that something faith, spiritual or moral perception, or whatever we

[1] "Phases of Faith," p. 72.

may choose to term it, and to believe this 'inward judgment,' rather than sensible perceptions must be right." Newman, in his zeal against an imaginary instance of false morality in the Scriptures, not only precipitates himself into the very system of fraud and falsehood for which he expresses—and I doubt not very sincerely—such disgust and horror, but absolutely commits his whole "inward judgment" to the principle on which such system is constructed. But this, however, is only one of the many acts of intellectual suicide constantly perpetrated by Infidelity. Let us proceed to examine this new charge which will, I dare say, evaporate as the previous ones into thin air, at the touch of the spear of scrutiny. The passage to which Newman alludes is not, I presume, that in the first chapter of Hosea—for that commands marriage—but that in the third chapter.

"Then said the Lord unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the Lord toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine. So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley. And I said unto her, thou shalt abide for me many days: thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee. For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterwards shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall

fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days."[1] Not a word is there here of "a voice in the air," nor of "being united to an impure woman." Hosea is commanded to purchase a woman beloved by "a friend," yet who for temporal seduction had forsaken her "friend," and attached herself to many lovers. Thus purchased on the covenant that she is henceforth to give up these lovers, to abandon her evil courses, and to consider herself the property of her purchaser alone—but between the purchaser and her there was to be no further communication. She was to abide "for him," waiting for him many days. The typing of this prophetic action almost explains itself—it describes the spiritual or religious state in which the Jews, as a people, were to remain between the Crucifixion of Christ and their final conversion in "the latter days" to Christianity. The Friend of whom Israel was beloved, and whom she deserted, was God: her many lovers were her numerous idolatries. Hosea represented Christ. Christ has purchased Israel, as He has the Christian Church, for Himself. But unlike His spouse, the Christian Church, He has not so purchased Israel as to become yet her husband. Israel is to wait "many days" for that union: in "the latter days" it will take place. Israel shall then return to her "Friend" the Lord their God, and to David their king. Meantime as in their temporal, so in their spiritual state, they are to remain "a sign" among the nations—utterly weaned from their former idolatries, prevented from falling into any image-idolatries resembling the

[1] Hosea iii.

former, yet not Christians; and furthermore without king, or prince, or sacrifice, utterly incapacitated to carry out or observe the ritual of their own defunct, because fulfilled, Leviticus. And the prophecy is now, and has been for centuries, most precisely verified. The Jews at this day have neither king, prince, nor sacrifice in their religion: the priesthood of the ephod has long since disappeared; all distinction between tribe and tribe, between Levi and the lay tribes, has long been lost; Jerusalem continues "trodden down of the Gentiles;" its Temple has passed away in fire and ashes, and the site is occupied by a Gentile mosque. Israel has been "abiding these many days" for some one: she herself acknowledges it: she has ceased to "play the harlot:" neither is she for any other man—any other religion than Him and His for whom she is "abiding." Neither idolatrous nor Christian, physically, nationally, and geographically disabled from observing the ceremonial law they profess, the Jews are in this, as in other respects, an exception to the whole world. Newman is here once more very unfortunate in missing the point of the whole prophetic action. Had Hosea united himself to the woman he purchased, the act would have conveyed a meaning directly the reverse of what the purchase, without such union, was designed and admirably calculated to convey to the people of Israel. But now, as the prophetic drama declared, so has it come to pass—Israel is entirely redeemed from her old, and preserved from new idolatries; but her Redeemer has not yet become her husband. When the times of the Gentiles shall have

been fulfilled, then shall both Jerusalem cease to be trodden down, Israel shall seek the Lord their God, and with the Gentile shall be one fold under one Shepherd—David their King—Christ both the root and branch of Jesse.

Inf. And this too, I suppose, is one of those Church or orthodox expositions of prophecy to which Newman would demur.

Chr. He must then demur to the broad facts of the religious state of the Jews at this moment; but all the world, literate and illiterate, know the Jews have in these days no king, no prince, no temple, no sacrifice, no ephod; they know also they do not worship images or teraphim of any description, and also that they are not of the Christian Church. All this is the very explanation Hosea himself, 760 years before the temple, and with the temple the capability of observing the temple ritual, was destroyed, delivered of the prophetic act he had been commanded to perform; the explanation is not modern, it is not ours, it is Hosea's own of his own act. All the Church does in the matter is to look round the world whereever the Jews are scattered, and then declare what neither Church nor Infidel can help confessing to be the truth, that the spiritual state of the Jews in these latter days is emphatically that which Hosea in his explanation of this act predicted it should be. If Newman insists that eighteen centuries are not "many days,"—or that the Jews have a king and prince of their own,—or that they are lapsed back into their old image-idolatries,—the world, having all the modern facts of the case before their eyes, and the

very words of Hosea in their hands, can itself, with the greatest facility, judge between Newman and the Scriptures he assails, between the Church and Infidelity. My reason goes with the Church and the Scriptures because facts go with them. I cannot possibly deny that such and such a prophecy is in Hosea: nor that he himself explained it in the plainest words; nor that the most accurate description of the present religious state of the Jews to whom it by name refers, is conveyed by the very words so written in Hosea. The question here is one quite as much of our senses as of intellect. The evidence of my senses convinces me of certain facts; the evidence of my eyesight convinces me of certain words in Scripture; it requires only common honesty to decide on the agreement or non-agreement of the words with the facts. The facts do agree to a tittle with the words: I conclude the Scriptures must be inspired, and my intellect sanctions the conclusion as the only rational one right reason can adopt.

Inf. I will pass rapidly over the remaining objections. In p. 93, "Phases of Faith," the old argument on the extermination of the Canaanites is thus restated by Newman. "Besides all this the command of slaughter to the Jew is not directed against the seven nations of Canaan only as modern theologians often erroneously assert. It is a universal permission of avaricious massacre and subjugation of 'the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations.'"[1]

Chr. This is a misstatement of Newman's, as a

[1] Deut. xx. 15.

reference to Deuteronomy xx. 15 will immediately demonstrate.

"When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: and when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thy hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: but the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: but thou shalt utterly destroy them, the Hittites, and the Amorites, and Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee: that they teach you not to do after all their abominations which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the Lord your God."

Inf. I intend presently to discuss whether such a command as this could possibly emanate from a just and merciful God.

Chr. Very well; but now let us confine ourselves

to one point at a time. Newman's ignorance of the letter of the Scriptures is here very striking. A most marked distinction is drawn between the cities of the seven nations, or of the inheritance enumerated and specified with scrupulous exactitude here and elsewhere to the people of Israel, and the cities of the nations afar off: the latter are in every case to receive a formal overture of peace. If accepted, they are to become tributaries; if rejected, yet under no circumstances are the women or the little ones to be put to the sword,—a course which was mercy itself compared to the usual practices of oriental conquerors in those times. But of the cities of the seven nations, "thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth, thou shalt utterly destroy them." Is not the distinction as marked as language can impress it?

Inf. An error clearly of Newman's in the quotation of Scriptures.

Chr. Newman, in his "Phases of Faith," comes before the public assigning certain reasons for his apostacy from Christianity. An inquiry into these reasons leads to the detection that some of them—and these not the least depended upon by the writer for his justification in so very serious a proceeding—are based upon palpable misquotations or misconceptions of the Scriptures which he impugns. In another man we should pronounce it gross ignorance of his subject; what shall we say it is in him? His apostacy, on the face of it, is partly the result of, to say the least, inaccurate consultation, imperfect knowledge of the Book whose authority he would overthrow.

INF. Every one is liable to such mistakes.

CHR. Every one is; but a scholar and an able controversialist like Newman, writing expressly against the Scriptures, should not, though liable, be guilty of such mistakes about the Scriptures. He asserts a certain command as contained in the Scriptures to be universal; reference instantly shows it not to be universal, but to be most carefully and jealously limited—but meantime nine in ten of his readers do not refer to the Scriptures, but take Newman's representation of them on trust, and just in proportion as they do this is their faith in the Scriptures shaken. Liability is surely, in so grave a cause, a poor excuse for the commission of error.

INF. You do not impute it as wilful.

CHR. No; but when discovered it recoils most damagingly on the whole reasoning process by which such apostacy was brought about.

INF. Well, here is another positive assertion of his on another subject,—"As Christianity in its origin was preached to the poor, so it was to the inward senses that its first preachers appealed as the supreme arbiters in the whole religious question."[1]

CHR. Another reckless proposition. Christ was the author and first preacher of Christianity: let us refer to St. Matthew xi. 1–5.

"It came to pass when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities. Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ,

[1] Phases of Faith, p. 95.

he sent two of his disciples, and said unto Him, Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said, Go and show John again those things which ye do *hear* and *see*. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." Is this appeal of "works," of what persons see and hear, to the inward or to the outward senses?

Inf. Christ, it is evident, here makes the bodily senses of the whole multitude the arbiters of the reality of His miracles. But what did the Apostles subsequently?

Chr. The Apostles themselves were "eye-witnesses from the beginning."[1] "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, *that ye also may have fellowship* with us."[2]

Here are the "outward," not the "inward" senses appealed to by St. John, as well as by our Saviour, in confirmation of the Gospel. St. Peter, again, was, after the descent of the Holy Ghost at Whitsuntide, the first who appealed by preaching to the Jews, and he bases his address on the evidence of the Jews' own senses as to the works of Christ. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know. This Jesus

[1] Luke i. [2] 1 John i. 1, 3.

hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."[1] Judge yourself then as to the correctness of this allegation of Newman's, "that the first preachers of Christianity appealed to the inward senses as the supreme arbiters of the whole religious question."

INF. I go on to another proposition of Newman, which I mention, because I am not aware that any one before him has ventured to make it. "This religion, Christianity, cannot pretend to self-sustaining power."[2]

CHR. How comes it then to be the religion of so great a portion of the world,—Europe, the Americas, Australasia, and a gradually increasing part of Asia? At one time there was but one Christian,—Christ Himself,—on the earth, and He was crucified. Supposing, as Infidelity asserts, that He remains dead and powerless, his religion has certainly never ceased to increase the force and extent of its sway. All historians admit that it has managed to fight its own battles rather too effectively to please the mere secular sovereignties, among which it reigns as a spiritual empire. It has taken possession of every shrine and temple in Europe; it has annihilated the superstitions and idolatries of Antiquity; and so far from exhibiting any symptom of decline, it continues to add people after people, nation after nation, to the long catalogue of its conquests. "They have turned the world upside down" was said of St. Paul, and its other champions in the first century of its propagation. "This is the victory that overcometh the world," declares St. John, "even our faith." It enu

[1] Acts ii. 22, 32. [2] Phases of Faith, p. 98.

merates "whole armies of martyrs;" it points to subjects whose multitudes exceed the census of any empire that ever existed; it reckons among its most devoted adherents the men that own no earthly fear, and in some form or other,—Rome, Puritanism, Huguenotism, Crusadism—it is ever falling upon and shattering temporal states to fragments.

INF. In this assertion of Newman's I cannot concur. Christianity has proved itself to be a terribly subversive, as well as self-sustaining and progressive power. It is, in fact, ridiculous to affirm that a religion which has augmented its votaries from twelve men to hundreds of millions, and its territories from "one upper chamber" to the dominion of half the globe, is not a self-sustaining power.

CHR. The facts, as usual, are stubbornly unfavorable and hostile to Infidelity.

INF. He may be more felicitous in his next statement. "We are told that Christianity is the decisive influence which has raised womankind. This does not appear to be true. The old Roman matron was relatively to her husband morally as high as in modern Italy. In point of fact, Christian doctrine, as propounded by Paul, is not at all so honorable to woman as that which German soundness of heart has established. Paul does not encourage a man to desire a mutual soul intimately to share griefs and joys, one on whom the confiding heart can repose, whose smile shall reward and soften toil, whose voice shall beguile sorrow."[1]

[1] Phases of Faith, p. 102.

Chr. Well, as to the Roman matron, Newman appends in a foot-note :—"It is not to the purpose to urge the political minority of the Roman wife. This was a mere inference from the high power of the head of the household. The father had right of death over his son, and, as the lawyers stated the case, the wife was on the level of one of the children."[1] The Roman husband had absolute power of life and death over his wife ; the Christian husband has nothing of the kind, and with every deference to Newman's domestic ideas on this subject, the great majority of women will, I think, consider such a change as being very much and decisively to the purpose of "raising" womanhood to an equality with manhood in social rights and privileges. But let us see what St. Paul really says :—

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it. So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh ; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery : but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. Nevertheless let every one so love his wife even as himself : and the wife see that she reverence her husband."[2]

[1] Phases of Faith, p. 102.

[2] Ephes. v. 25, 28–33.

If the devotion of a husband's love towards his wife can be carried higher than St. Paul here enjoins, or on higher motives, the language for its expression remains to be discovered. It is as infinitely superior to any which that native land of Infidelity and obscurity—Germany and Germanism—has ever penned, as the Christian mother and maiden are superior to the old Roman slave-wife,—for she was nothing higher,—or to the sanguinary viragos of old, or the sentimental heroines of modern Germany. Infidelity could never suggest so sublime and yet chivalrous a reason for conjugal affection as this of Christianity: "Husbands, give honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life."[1] This unites love and holiness in the marriage garland of immortality; that single verse is to my mind worth all the books that Infidel intellect ever composed. The study of all its authors will never bring so much pure, genuine happiness to the domestic hearth, as the sanctifying this one brief precept of the Christian faith. Woman is indebted for her restoration to Christ. Where Christ is not known, woman is still a beast of burden or the degraded slave of passion; it is only in Him and by Him that she can recover her original equality with man. I consider the man who speaks against Christianity, however specious or poetic his diction and sentiments about "love and confiding hearts" may be, a traitor to the best interests of womanhood. Proceed.

[1] 1 Pet. iii. 7.

Inf. The rights, avers Newman, of men and nations are wholly ignored in the New Testament, but the authority of slave-owners and of kings is very distinctly recorded for solemn religious sanction.[1]

Chr. Ah! most people think very differently on this point from Newman. "Proprium est Ecclesiæ Cæsares odisse." The Popes and the Western Church have not signalized themselves by any remarkable submissiveness to kings.

Inf. Nor, unless when it suited her purpose, has your own Anglo-Catholic Church; for she unkinged a certain James II., and disinherited his lineage, in spite of her passive obedience, homilies, and theory.

Chr. And what was Cromwell's text-book against kings? Was it not the Scriptures?

Inf. Nevertheless you do not answer Newman's political objection, that the rights of man and nations are wholly ignored in the New Testament.

Chr. I do not, simply because I do not know what Newman means by the rights of man and of nations. Had he particularized them, we could bring him at once, as in our other instances, to Scripture.

Inf. He specifies by implication one right.

Chr. What is it?

Inf. The right of a man not to be forced into slavery. He affirms such a right to be ignored in the New Testament.

Chr. Then he utterly misrepresents the New Testament. St. Paul shall answer him.

"Knowing this, that the law is not made for a

[1] Phases of Faith, p. 112.

righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for defilers of themselves with mankind, for *men-stealers*, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God."[1]

Traders in slaves, for such the original term *ἀνδραποδίσται* means, are, you observe, classed by St. Paul with the most infamous criminals. Timothy is charged to denounce man-stealing in the Church as a high sin against the Law and Gospel of the glorious God. Mrs. Beecher Stowe could not, I think, vindicate the "right of man" from slavery in sterner language than St. Paul did at the first preaching of Christianity.

Inf. But why was this denunciation against slavery so long overlooked?

Chr. For the same reason why other denunciations of Scripture against other sins are overlooked, wilfully overlooked by men, because the denunciation militated against their temporal interests. Obedience involved the sacrifice of that interest.

Inf. But was not this strong prohibition of slavery an addition of Paul's to the Gospel?

Chr. St. Paul never made any addition whatever to the Gospel. He constantly professes to deliver nothing of his own; nothing but what he and the other Apostles had received from Christ. And thus

[1] 1 Tim. i. 9.

in this charge to Timothy, according to what is slave-dealing a sin? "According to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust." In that trust St. Paul was "faithful," and this fidelity he claims as, by the grace of God, his only merit. "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who hath enabled me." To denounce many of the crimes specified in the above passage, slave-dealing included, in the midst of a Pagan world wholly abandoned to them, required greater physical and moral courage in St. Paul than modern times have yet been permitted to see exemplified in the person of Newman or any other word-ardent abolitionist. Yet Newman has the strange audacity to assert, "that it is in vain to deny that the most grasping of slave-owners asks nothing more of abolitionists than that they would all adopt Paul's creed!"

Inf. Newman does not appear to have studied the Scriptures in their integrity, or he would not, I think, hazard statements so easily disproved. Here occurs another assertion of his:[1] "Lastly, it is a lamentable fact that not only do superstitions about witches, ghosts, devils, and diabolical miracles, derive a strong support from the Bible—(and in fact have been exploded by nothing but the advance of physical philosophy)—but what is far worse, the Bible alone has nowhere sufficed to establish an enlightened religious toleration."

Chr. The Bible reveals to us the existence of immaterial powers, of a world of disembodied spirits,

[1] Phases of Faith, p. 112.

capable of influencing and acting upon the world of embodied spirits. This revelation is in complete analogy with the rest of nature. All physical nature is permeated by invisible forces; our own bodies are acted upon for life or death by such invisible agencies as heat, light, air, electricity, which are in fact the dynastic powers that pervade organized and unorganized matter alike. In the same way our souls are subject to the invisible influences of the disembodied spiritual world. Not only in this universe is matter acted upon by matter, but mind is acted upon by mind, spirit by spirit, intellect by intellect, as between man and man, so also between man and the immaterial Intelligences. So far is the connection between such sentient existences "exploded," that all modern discoveries tend to confirm the operation behind the visibilities of matter of powers invisible and distinct from matter.

Inf. A person may, I think, hold such opinions in the abstract, without being chargeable with superstition.

Chr. Now in a book which, like the Scriptures, treats of the state of man before the redemption of his soul from the power of Satan by Christ, illustrations of the nature and extent of that power might be expected to be given, and indeed to abound.

Inf. I concede that there must have been great truthfulness of mind in the Evangelists in thus recording the existence, in full operation, of a frightful system of diabolical possession in man. The facts they state could scarcely be invented, still less in any age be mistaken for ordinary bodily maladies. It is

one of the pious frauds of your Bible commentators to endeavor to explain them into epilepsies, catalepsies, and similar well-known disorders—with what effect? I throw the commentary down, exclaiming, "This man thinks, the Bible here tells a falsehood; but he thinks, also, it will never do to let the world think so too—so he perverts the Scripture into its direct contrary"—as if the motive were not transparent to the Infidel! I am not a universal Infidel, and in my judgment the Scriptures in this instance, considered in a philosophical light, supply us with valuable facts illustrative of a certain state of the human mind, which is, perhaps, though under modified aspects, as prevalent now as ever it was in the world.

Chr. Infidels are most inconsistent beings. It is difficult to argue on the line with them. One moment you take your stand on "science, philosophy, the march of intellect, and the nineteenth century"—the next, on the ruins of superstitions, in Newman's language, exploded by the advance of this very philosophy.

Inf. But consider, it is extraordinary what very little real knowledge there is in the world! We are as ignorant now as the forest savages, of the real nature of existences! What is gravitation, what is sensation, what is thought, what is the principle of life and permanency?—what, above all, is truth?

Chr. Is your Infidelity extending itself, or does this language mean that, without reflecting upon the fact, all knowledge reduces itself to you to a principle not unlike "faith?" Conviction in the existence

of things you feel and know to be, but cannot yet clearly see nor define.

INF. What profound ignorance in our scientific men these "spirit manifestations," so rampant of late in the two most advanced "physical philosophy" countries in the world, have exposed? Absurd and silly as most of them are, yet others present difficulties of solution not to be denied, which science, however, attempts to evade by denying—and herein science is notoriously dishonest. I am inclined to suspect that, so far from such "superstitions" being exploded by philosophy, philosophy is in danger—unless it fairly confronts them—of being "exploded" by the superstitions. Thus it is we attempt impossibilities in seeking to know what truly constitutes knowledge. The greater part of that which passes for it is mere organized verbiage; analyzed, it leaves nothing but a sense of sound to fill the mind.

CHR. Well, as Newman does not particularize any especial instance of "diabolical miracle" by which we could test the truth or consistency of his ideas on the subject, we must pass on to objections with which we can specifically deal.

INF. I shall adduce but one more from Newman's writings. Others of a deeper nature than any I find brought forward in his works, and more destructive, I think, of the pretensions of Christianity, will remain to be discussed in my own name. Even on the validity of this last objection of his, he and Martineau the Socinian differ.

CHR. Newman and Martineau, immediately they differ from the Creeds of Christianity, proceed to

differ from themselves. Newman first disbelieves all dogma, that is, all positive truth expressed in clear propositions, then he progresses to disbelieve the Church, which holds the truth in such forms, then to reject the Old Testament, anon the New, and finally terminates "progress" by disbelieving Jesus Christ Himself, pronouncing, "that in consistency of moral goodness, Jesus fell far below vast numbers of his unhonored disciples."[1]

INF. My allusion applies to that assertion.

CHR. In these different steps of Infidelity, Martineau keeps time and pace with Newman till the last; there he unlinks his arm and quits him. Martineau "believes in Jesus Christ, not as very God, nor as the Saviour, but as the absolute moral image of man—the moral Head of the human race." Whereupon Newman aptly retorts, "What, my Socinian friend, do you mean by 'Jesus?' You, with me, reject the Canon of the Old and New Testament, the Creeds, and all authority in the Church; you, with me, disbelieve the greater portion of the statements in these Scriptures about 'Jesus;' your ideal of 'Jesus' is derived from that small quantum of the New Testament, which, out of the whole canon, it pleases you not to repudiate: what quantum is that? No one but yourself knows. I say it in deep seriousness, not sarcastically—publish an expurgated Gospel: for, in truth, I do not know how much of what I have now adduced from the Gospel as fact, you will admit to be fact."[2] Newman cannot accept

[1] Phases of Faith, p. 164. [2] Ibid., p. 163.

Jesus in any authoritative capacity whatever. Martineau accepts as the moral model of humanity a certain Jesus, which, however, is not the Jesus of the canonical Scriptures, nor of the Catholic Church, but of just so much of these Scriptures and Creeds as he chooses not to reject. Publish therefore, reiterates Newman, an expurgated Gospel—then I shall be able to judge whether your ideal Jesus is or is not a moral model. If Martineau did so, Newman most probably would intimate that he had not "progressed" out of the Church, the Creeds, the canonical Scriptures, the faith in a Divine Jesus, to accept Martineau's Socinianism as his Church and creed, his "expurgated" Testament as his Gospel, or his mutilated ideal as his moral model. What, in fact, would such concession be but submission to Martineau himself as Creed, Scripture, moral idea, and Church in one individual? It would form a most humiliating terminus to the series of Newman's "progresses," that he should have disbelieved all things only to believe in Martineau alone at last.

INF. But dogmas appear to me very objectionable —religious dogmas especially.

CHR. So are laws—criminal laws especially—held by some to be highly objectionable. But why should a truth clearly and positively expressed, be more objectionable than the same truth negatively expressed or obscurely implied? Is it not indispensable that legal enactments against crime should be plainly and intelligibly worded?

INF. But disbelief in a dogma is not a crime.

CHR. Not in your opinion; but in the opinion of

the Church, certain disbeliefs are regarded as crimes against God—sins. Acting on that opinion, she is right in wording her enactments against such sins in the clearest possible language. The question is not, here, "Is her opinion right or wrong?"—but, her opinion being such, Is she not bound to state it in positive, unmistakable language? Then, as to imposing such a dogma upon any one's mind, does not the law of England impose its dogmas on every Englishman's mind? Does not every Englishman make his peculiar pride to consist in obedience to the civil law?—nevertheless he would impugn the honesty or ability of the legislature, if the law were not positively and dogmatically expressed. If the law did not "dogmatize" on theft, fraud, murder, felony, treason, no judge could expound the law, nor any jury find a verdict according to law. We cannot be Englishmen unless we accept and obey the law of England; that law is definitely contained and positively expressed in the civil and criminal code. We cannot be Churchmen unless we accept and act upon the dogmas of the faith of the Church; these dogmas are laid down in their positive form in the Three Creeds. There is, surely, no shadow of spiritual tyranny exhibited in this necessary exercise of the Church's jurisdiction. If any justification were needed of the jealousy with which the Church guards these bulwarks of the faith, it is amply supplied by the experience of all ages. All her children who remain within them, remain within the faith, within the Scriptures, within Jesus Christ. They have ever proved the defences of salvation to her fold. For the

sake of the souls in that fold, as well as from the sense of her duty to her Lord, she stands by both the necessity and the value of having the orthodox dogmata of the faith impressed, in the most positive language, on the minds of her members. She, as the teacher, is bound to such perspicuity; they, as the taught, have a right to demand it at her hands.

INF. But of what real use are these Creeds?—they convert none to Christianity.

CHR. They keep people in Christianity. That is their use—and a very high use too. What was the first step in Newman's apostacy? Rejection of the Creeds. The last? Rejection of our Saviour. What has the soul of either Newman or Martineau now to rest upon? Absolutely nothing intelligible or expressible to others. And what is the difference, either in faith or science, between this sheer vacuum of all truth and the profoundest ignorance of every truth? Yet this emptying forth of one sacred verity after another, till all being discharged, the soul remains a hollow desolation, Newman characterizes as "progress"—steadfast adherence to the faith once for all delivered to the Church, he terms "bigotry."

INF. But he nevertheless retains one strong dogma. In p. 173 (Phases of Faith), he enunciates it thus:—"The great doctrine on which all practical religion depends is the sympathy of God with the perfection of individual man;"—this is the Final Phase in his changes of faith, and contains in truth a noble sentiment.

CHR. It does so—but is it Newman's?

INF. Whose else?

CHR. His who said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."[1]

These are the words of Jesus Christ, of whom Newman writes, "It is possible the Gospel narrative is unjust to His memory. So far from being the picture of perfection, it sometimes seems to me the picture of a conscious and wilful impostor. His general character is too high for this, and I therefore make deductions from the account. Still I do not see how the present narrative could have grown up if he had been really simple and straightforward, and not perverted by his essentially false position."[2] Yet from this Jesus Christ, thus spoken of, Newman does not hesitate to plagiarize "the great doctrine" on which all practical religion depends, and into which all his own phases of faith resolve themselves as a final rest. Christ constantly taught this doctrine; He, through life and in death, exemplified it: He loved his enemies, He blessed them that cursed Him, He did good to them that hated Him, He prayed for them which despitefully used Him and persecuted Him—He was perfect, as his Father in heaven. Christians believe that God has so deeply sympathized with man, that in Jesus Christ He became both our Saviour from sin, and our perfecter for a more glorious existence. Newman accepts the doctrine as the foundation of practical religion:

[1] Matt. v. 44, 48.

[2] Phases of Faith, p. 154.

of Him who first taught it, and has alone in this world fully practised it, he declares that "He taught fanatical precepts, and advanced weak and foolish arguments;"—adding, with a complacency evidently unconscious of the labyrinth of contradictions in which he has involved himself,—"a new dispensation is wanted to retrieve the lost reputation of piety."[1]

"Quis tam contrarius sibi?"

Inf. I observe such contradictions. He adopts as the one doctrine, par excellence in practice, one out of the many doctrines taught by Christ. He asserts it has already, for the last three thousand years, produced bands of countless saints, yet affirms "a new dispensation is wanted." His premises confute his inference. The doctrine he confesses has satisfied prophets, apostles, martyrs; there plainly, therefore, can be no need of a new dispensation.

Chr. But there is great need to guard that dispensation of Jesus Christ, which has confessedly produced such results, from being superseded by, or exchanged for any "new" dispensation, which may, on very slight examination, prove like Newman's last phase of faith, to be nothing more than a concealed plagiarism of one of the rudimentary teachings of Christ. Does this barrenness of invention again exhibit any intellect in infidelity? The last "phase" of its most talented advocate results in his being compelled, against his whole will and mind, to return whence he started, and immediately practical reli-

[1] Phases of Faith, p. 167.

gion is desiderated to sit down as a helpless child, and write out as "his own great doctrine," at the feet of Christ, one of the first elementary precepts the lips of Christ taught his disciples and the world. He knows not where to go, except to him in whom he yet professes to have no faith. You will do wisely, I think, after such avowal of intellectual sterility, to look to other quarters than Newman for aid in your onslaught on Christianity and its founder. You cannot reasonably expect much from him who, in his first "practical" difficulty, falls back on the very religion he attacks.

Inf. Martineau, however, is, I understand, a Unitarian. Now I have always thought that if I became a Christian at all, I should become a Unitarian.

Chr. All Christians hold to the unity or oneness of God, all are therefore Unitarians.

Inf. One of that denomination, I mean, as opposed to Trinitarianism.

Chr. Precisely; who make the unity of the Godhead a contradiction to the Trinity of the Persons, instead of, as the Church does, identifying the Trinity as one in the Unity, and the Unity as indivisible in the Trinity. The Church condemns the notion of such Unitarians, as implying a fracture in the Unity of the Godhead. They divide the substance or hypostasis of God, and then pronounce one-third part alone of that substance to be God. This is the same process as if a man, dividing the sun into three parts, insisted on one of these parts being the sun. Man is a unity of soul, mind, and body; divide these into three parts, is any one of them by itself "man?"

Thus, then, Unitarians, by some strange hallucination, attempt to divide the indivisible, and would have us worship—were such a thing possible—the third part of God for God.

Inf. But this is not the view entertained by themselves of their tenets. They hold God to be one.

Chr. No doubt of it. So do all Christians; so do the Mohammedans; so do the Jews; so did philosophic Greece. In this sense all these religions are Unitarian.

Inf. But the Church holds that in this unity is a Trinity of Persons, the Godhead of these three Persons in the Trinity constituting the Unity of God.

Chr. True; a perfect, indivisible, co-eternal unity or oneness, the only "true" oneness that does exist; all others so called being but unsubstantial reflections of it.

Inf. Unitarians believe such Trinity of Persons to have no existence whatever in the Unity.

Chr. For which reason the Church refusing them, as mutilators of the Unity the name of Unitarians, terms them after one of their most notorious doctors, Socinus. Some call them Anti-Trinitarians, though this name Jews, Islamites, and heathens, share equally with them. So difficult is it to define in what doctrinal respects, on this point, the one is distinguished from the other.

Inf. Let them share it, let such difficulty ensue. Between the Orthodox Church and these Unitarians, the difference in doctrine is deep and impassable—is it not?

Chr. Certainly.

INF. According to their own definition of Unity, they maintain the unity, and reject a Trinity, in the Godhead.

CHR. Well?

INF. Then, to my mind, their view is both more simple, and more philosophic than that of the Orthodox Church. The nations you named all hold God to be a Unity: the Church alone holds a Trinity in such Unity. Numbers and philosophy are against you.

CHR. No; the Church outnumbers these nations, but in a question of this kind numbers do not enter; and as for philosophy, our proposition is, that be it philosophy or not, it is not Christianity.

INF. You do not, then, admit a Socinian to be a Christian?

CHR. A Christian is one who has faith in Jesus Christ as God incarnate; a Socinian denies Him to be God at all: a Socinian, therefore, cannot with truth or propriety be called a Christian.

INF. Nor in that sense do I think I could be a Christian. Socinianism presents to my judgment the right philosophic view of Christ and Christianity. A Socinian, therefore, it is possible I may become, but not a Christian, one who believes that God became incarnate in Jesus Christ.

CHR. You would then become a Socinian for this reason—because you regard the view in which Socinianism considers Christ the true philosophic view of Him.

INF. Yes.

CHR. This view rejects and negatives Christ as God.

INF. It does: it considers Him a very pure, holy, and sublime character: the ideal of good, religious, spiritual manhood; the best of men, the most perfect model of manhood which has ever existed, still man only, not God.

CHR. And you admit such view to be diametrically opposed to that of the Church Orthodox and Catholic?

INF. I do.

CHR. And if a Christian be one whose faith rests on Jesus Christ as being the Incarnation of God, you, thus denying such incarnation, would not claim to be a Christian?

INF. I would not: I only claim to take the correct philosophic view of Christ.

CHR. According then to this definition, the Unitarian or Socinian is not a Christian: he is the philosopher who takes not the Christian, but, nevertheless, in his judgment the true view of the person of Christ. Am I right?

INF. Quite.

CHR. The question for decision, then, is this:—Is the Socinian view really philosophic or not? If, instead of being in any sense consistency or philosophy, it proves, on inquiry, to be a mass of contradictory propositions, you would, of course, reject its whole system as irrational and untenable. Let us then, examine it. The fundamental tenet of Socinianism is, "Jesus Christ is not God, but He was the best and holiest of men."

INF. Pause a moment. Can you by any stretch of faith believe that the Almighty God ever could

become man? That any man, at any time whatever, was, or is, also Almighty God?

CHR. What! you a Pantheist, and ask such a question? You who hold every part of nature to be part also of God, part consequently of omnipotence, to doubt whether "the best and holiest of men" can be, in reference to God, what nature even in her lowest types is—a materialism of Deity! We hold but one incarnation of God—that one, Christ; you hold millions—those millions, nature—yet object one to us. On your own theory, what can be Nature itself so much as the Incarnation?

INF. Pass that by at present. I will recur to that point afterwards. Permit me now to argue, not as a Pantheist, but a Unitarian.

CHR. Be it so. I first observe, then, that I might here turn with deadly effect against you, your own argument of numbers. The whole religion of the East, from the earliest eras, and for the last eighteen centuries of the West also, has been, and is now, based on this all but universal faith in the incarnation or incarnations of Deity. Heathenism, Buddhism, Brahminism, believe in many, Christianity in one sole incarnation, Christ Jesus. This fact alone disposes of the possibility of such faith. Your question should rather be, "Is any faith real but that which is grounded on such incarnation? Is any faith true but that which accepts the one true incarnation in Christ?"

INF. I cannot accept it.

CHR. Are you all matter?

INF. No.

Chr. Something which is not matter, lives and acts within you, is "incarnate" within you, is different from, yet is one with, your body. You yourself are thus the fact of a spirit incarnate; which fact, nevertheless, being yourself, yourself cannot accept. Is this part of the same precious philosophy? If you cannot believe that which your own reason and senses prove to you of yourself, it would be preposterous to expect you to believe any proposition whatever of any thing not yourself.

Inf. But the incarnation of a spirit is different in degree from the incarnation of God in Christ.

Chr. It is, however, the essence of the principle at which you stumble, the incarnation of immortal spirit in mortal matter.

Inf. I stumble at the idea of God Himself, the Author of all spirit and all matter, becoming incarnate in one of His own creatures.

Chr. God has in one sense been such an incarnation from the beginning; the soul incarnate in man is an emanation of God at his creation.

Inf. An emanation of God, but not God Himself, as you say Christ—God incarnate—was.

Chr. True; therein lies the distinction. Our souls incarnate were the creation of God. God incarnate in Christ was and is the Uncreated Himself. We are incarnations of created spirits; Christ was the incarnation of the All-creating Eternal Spirit Himself.

Inf. It is to me an incomprehensibility.

Chr. A mystery may be entirely incomprehensible, and yet perfectly true; and a thousand hard, obvious

facts may be adduced in proof of its truth. You cannot comprehend the incarnation of spirit in man; thousands of such incarnate spirits accost your senses, exchange with you thoughts, emotions, counsels,—experiences of which matter by itself is neither capable nor cognizant. Each of these thousands is a mystery, and yet a truth confronting you face to face every day of your life. Every day you meet as a fact, what, as a mystery, you find utterly incomprehensible and inexplicable.

Inf. But I still persist that the incarnation of God Himself, as Jesus Christ, must be rejected as incredible by philosophy.

Chr. The belief in the Incarnation is as far above a certain kind of philosophy as the soul of Newton was above his apple. It is the faith, which, rising from the Cross and Resurrection of Christ, pierces through the very heavens to the throne of its Divine Object, Author, and Finisher, and from the creation it has been, in either its true or some corrupt form, the faith of the human race. Christianity teaches such universal faith to have received its realization in the incarnation of God in Christ. Socinianism represents Christ as merely a good man, and, ignoring the radical truth at the base of all religions, affirms such representation to be sound philosophy. Let us analyze its claim to this assumption; let us inquire whether, upon the Socinian view of Christ as man only, He was a good man or not.

Inf. You go beyond me now. Do you assert that Christ was not a good man?

Chr. I mean that Christ, if he were merely what

the Socinians maintain—man only—could not be "a good man." Their theory destroys itself. He could not, were He man only, speak, act, and promise as He did and yet be a good man, far less the ideal of human goodness. If He were not God as well as man, His character assumes a very different aspect indeed from that of "goodness."

INF. You, at any rate, argue boldly, and to the point.

CHR. Christianity should always do so. Let us take our Lord's own words—a few instances will suffice: we could quote fifty illustrations of the same kind, but the force of the argument needs no addition.

INF. But you must not quote, as Scripture, any portion of your canon which the Socinians reject as Scripture.

CHR. I have no intention of doing so, though if we rejected what they do, we should consider ourselves indirectly rejecting all Scripture, from beginning to end. They cut out every verse which refers to Christ in His Divine nature, on which rule every book in the Scriptures should be cut out; for every book, every chapter, is instinct with the Divinity of the Messiah. Suppose you took a knife, and denying the existence of life in a certain animal, proceeded to amputate successively every limb or member which most vividly displayed the action of life; and the mutilated body still exhibiting symptoms of vitality, you finally dispatched the trunk also, and then exclaimed, "I told you there was no life in that animal!" Much in this way, to my mind, the

Socinians treat the Bible: wherever they can they cut out its life, which is Christ. Isaiah, St. John, St. Paul, St. Peter, being got rid of, the same life yet palpitates in Moses, Jeremiah, St. Matthew, St. James: as long as they leave one joint of a finger of that divine hand unmutilated, it will remain vitally expressive of the Godhead of Him by whose Spirit the whole Scriptures were animated and inspired. Socinianism, therefore, in a critical sense, is merely mutilation of the Scriptures; but I am dealing with it as a system of pretentious, but unsound philosophy. I will cite such evidence only as the Socinians themselves allow to be Scripture; not even the apostles' words, but the words of Christ Himself.

"Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."[1]

"The High Priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."[2]

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from the other. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."[3]

[1] Matt. xix. 29. [2] Mark xiv. 61.
[3] Matt. xxv. 31, 32, 46.

"All things are delivered unto me by the Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him."[1]

"Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth unto the end shall be saved.

"I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it."[2]

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."[3]

"Preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."[4]

Here are a certain number of assertions relative to Himself made by Jesus Christ. He affirms of Himself that He is Almighty—that all power is given unto Him in heaven and earth. Is this that He affirms of Himself true or false? If true, He is more than man, and Socinianism is false? If false, He cannot be a "good man," and Socinianism is again on that proposition false.

He affirms that He will give everlasting life to such as sacrifice their temporal interests for His

[1] Matt. xi. 27.
[2] Matt. x. 22, 33, 37, 39.
[3] Matt. xxviii. 20.
[4] Matt. xvi. 15, 16.

name's sake. It is no exaggeration to say, that since He has thus spoke, countless numbers have, in reliance on these and similar promises, sacrificed themselves and the world for His sake—men and women admitted by the world itself to be good, earnest, high-principled characters. Have such been deceived or not by Christ? Can He give such a thing as "everlasting life?" If He can, He is more than man; if He cannot, He has beguiled and betrayed tens of thousands of the gentlest, noblest, and most confiding natures the world has produced, and cannot, therefore, be a good man. In either view Socinianism is untenable.

He affirms that He will sit on the throne of his glory, as the Christ, the Son of the Blessed: that He will assemble all nations: that He will distinguish between the righteous and the wicked: that He will condemn the latter to everlasting punishment, and reward the former with everlasting life. Can mere man do this? Can one man—being man only—adjudge, and that forever, all mankind to heaven or hell? Will any philosophy admit this? Is Socinianism philosophy when it assumes it? But if Christ judges not as man only, but as God also, what again becomes of Socinianism? On either supposition its system falls to fragments.

He asserts that, in comparison with devotion towards Him, the most sacred human affections must be immolated and abandoned: He states that this principle will introduce "variance" into every family: that for acting upon it his followers will be hated of all men: yet every one that endures to the end shall

be saved. Take any man: put these words into his mouth: supposing him to be man only, could you say a character avowing this principle of the domestic sword, and proclaiming beforehand the inevitable results of the operation of such a principle between parents and children, brothers and sisters, was a "good man"—the "holiest of men?" Would it be sense, reason, or philosophy for any mere human being, on a par with ourselves, to use this language towards our finest and most sacred affections; to command, when He was in question, this universal disruption of natural ties—and that on the strength of a promise which nothing short of omnipotence can realize—that the loss of life in the discharge of such obedience would insure its eternal duration in heaven?

He asserts that he is everywhere present wherever the Gospel is preached to any creature: that of all the human beings to whom it is preached, such as believe and are baptized shall be saved, and such as believe not shall be damned. Can mere man be omnipresent, or is this all a deception and a delusion? Can mere man, of his own manhood, prescribe the conditions of salvation, or inflict damnation at pleasure on the whole of his own race? If not, and if Christ were man only, what opinion must we, from these words, form of his character? By these, and a multitude of other proofs which I reverentially abstain from adding, it is, I think, clear that Jesus Christ was either more than man, or, if man only, He could not truly be termed a "good man," the ideal of human goodness and holiness.

Consider it in any way you please, Socinianism confutes its own pretensions. It is neither Scripture nor reason, neither philosophy nor Christianity.

Inf. But do you consider Jesus Christ responsible—as it were—for all the effects of His words, from His death to the present moment?

Chr. Take up the Scriptures; read them with ordinary attention: judge if Christ spoke a single sentence but what carries on the face of it His intention that it should make an indelible impression on every one who heard it, or to whom it should be made known. He puts the weight of eternity upon every word He speaks. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my Word shall not pass away." He is, therefore, in your phrase, responsible, not for what this or that sect may have perverted His meaning into, but for the plain, direct meaning His words themselves convey, which He designed them to convey, which with the most expressive solemnity He assures us will be verified, and to the least iota substantiated by the action of omnipotence. It seems to me that we only then, for the first time, discover the infinite gravity of words, as what they ought to be—the pure expression of pure truth—when we first hear Christ speak. Think you that He who declared, "by thy words shalt thou be judged, by thy words shalt thou be condemned—Verily I say unto you, that for every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give an account at the day of judgment," was one Himself to speak unadvisedly with His lips on subjects which are universally felt to be the most awful that can affect the heart and soul of man? He

intended every word He spoke to be weighed by every one of us, for life or death. "Whosoever heareth those sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken to a wise man; whosoever doeth them not, I will liken him to a foolish man."

INF. Then, for all the sufferings of good men—as we call them—undergone in this world purely for the sake of Christ, you hold Christ Himself on His own words responsible.

CHR. He Himself claims such responsibility; He states that He Himself must be the cause and the motive of all such sacrifices and sufferings: His whole religion, in this respect, is comprehended in one phrase, "For my sake." "In that ye do it, ye do it unto me." He promises nothing certain in this world but the cross; the crown He defers to another existence. Is such a crown of everlasting life at His absolute disposal or not?

INF. The Socinian would say, "No." Everlasting life can be the gift of God only. If Christ has such gift at command, He must of necessity be God.

CHR. Everywhere throughout the Scriptures He alleges it to be entirely in His hands. He promises it everywhere to the righteous as His gift. Is the redemption of that promise within His power or not? Multitudes of earnest men have sacrificed all earthly prospects upon the faith of that promise. Has Christ practised a deception upon them or not?

INF. That question goes to the root of the matter.

CHR. It does. It shows Socinianism in its real light. If it be beyond the power of Christ to verify such promise, then is He the most cruel of all im-

postors, and the noblest-hearted of mankind have been His dupes and victims. He is the reverse of a good or holy man. If, on the other hand, the redemption of this promise be, as He affirms, and as Christians believe, absolutely in His power,—if He Himself be this eternal life, and can communicate Himself to whomsoever He pleases,—then is He not man only, but infinitely greater in nature and power than man. Thus again, on the largest scale, Socinianism not only confutes, but reverses its own theory of the person and character of Christ. Denying Him as God, it must upon its own premises deny Him also as "a good or holy man," for it holds Him up as a mere man leading thousands to misery and martyrdom on the faith of promises which no mere man can perform. In what character of Christ, then, does Socinianism end? Is it not that of an unparalleled false prophet and deceiver of souls, and yet it styles itself "Philosophic Christianity!"

Inf. But whatever the inference may be, it is undeniably true that Jesus Christ has induced countless numbers to voluntarily undergo the severest privations and pains in sole dependence on His promise of eternal happiness in heaven. Will they be deceived or not?

Chr. That, as you observe, is the question which Socinianism has to answer, and yet remain Socinianism, yet continue to maintain that He is both mere man, and the holiest and best of men. Our lips refuse to express, even on supposition, what, if the Socinian tenet were true, the conduct of Christ must be confessed to have been. But if these

promises are more certain to be redeemed than our senses are at this moment certain of the existence of heaven and earth, and if their redemption can only be effected by omnipotence in the Redeemer Himself, then Jesus Christ is more than man. Socinianism is, in its whole conception of Him, as self-contradictory as it is blind to the true nature of the religion and kingdom which He has revealed.

Inf. But the Socinian may say that Christ deceived others, being Himself deceived. Good men may, as to abstract doctrines, unwittingly deceive others, yet be in their lives models of morality and personal goodness.

Chr. Christ nowhere glances at the possibility of His being deceived. He constantly affirms that what He teaches man is that which He Himself had seen and heard in heaven: that He testifies of realities in the midst of which He had Himself reigned as God. There was nothing abstract or separate from Himself in His doctrines; they were simply to Him facts of Himself, the revelation of which, as the knowledge of the true God, and His kingdom of everlasting life, He came down in His incarnate state to communicate to mankind.

Inf. Rejecting then Socinianism as inconsistent with itself, as neither religion nor reason, though I inclined to believe it united both in an easy form, I again fall back on Infidelity. You concede Christ has caused an incalculable amount of individual suffering in the world; He Himself calls every one to the Cross; the best men as it were respond to the call; they live suffering, they die suffering. Now if

the crown of heaven, if eternal life with God be a deception—

CHR. Well, what then?

INF. Certainly Christ was not a good or holy man.

CHR. That was not what you were about to say; you intended, I think, to express some much stronger sentiment.

INF. I did.

CHR. What prevented you?

INF. I cannot explain. But I mean that any being, who, knowing such promise to be deceptive, and foreseeing also the consequences of practising such deception, through unborn generations, upon the souls of the most sensitive and amiable of mankind, nevertheless shrunk not from carrying it out at the cost of His own crucifixion—

CHR. Finish.

INF. He would, in any view, be an awful being.

CHR. You fear to state, in plain language, the conclusion from such premises. The Jews had no such fear. They beheld Christ exercising uncontrollable power over nature; they felt His spiritual power over their own souls: they listened to doctrines which it needed no philosophy to tell them could be exemplified only by human nature everywhere;—their own and the heathen alike,—sustaining the cross of shame and suffering. They did not say that He was mere man. They asked Him who and what He was, and whose authority He bore and represented. He told them He was God as well as man,—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,—the I AM of eternity,—the future Judge of the universe. For that they

crucified Him, because, as they truly said, "He made himself equal with God." But they never regarded Him as mere man; their decision was direct and to the purpose, there could be no middle supposition. If the being who stood among them, and whose presence they felt was beginning to shake the whole world, was not God, He was the Prince of darkness; if He was not heaven, He was hell. The Scriptures record the reasoning and deduction of the Jews without any modification of their language. On their own premises, the reasoning of the Jews was correct. We thus come to the tremendous precipice to which logical Infidelity and Unitarianism thrust their professors, a few steps after their rejection of the Godhead of Christ.

Inf. Can there be no medium between these two extremes? Must Christ be received as God, or renounced as the Power of darkness?

Chr. If Christ be a deceiver of souls, most certainly He is not a human one; if neither divine, nor human, what remains it that He is? Here are a host of facts connected with Christ, His mission and character, which immediately He is confessed in the truth of his nature, "God of the substance of his Father, begotten before all worlds, man of the substance of his mother born in the world," present us with their own solution. Christ being God, these facts could not be otherwise. Reject Him as God, the mystery of Christ, so far from being solved, becomes such as no earthly knowledge can explain, no philosophy confront, no heart of man reflect upon without horror and trembling. No other view than

that delivered to and by the Church explains the mystery of Christ. Philosophy or Unitarianism, when it wanders from the Church, finds itself, immediately upon its own principles, brought into the presence of a Being it shrinks from naming; it recoils from the mingled fire and thick darkness of its own chaos; it shudders at the infernal potency, the omnipotence of cruelty and evil, into which its "intellect" is every moment on the point of changing that "God over all, blessed forever." If you abandon Infidelity, you will not, I conclude, attempt to seek your rest in that most hopeless of all compromises between truth and falsehood—Socinianism.

INF. Do Christians themselves understand the full purport of the words they use concerning Christ as God?

CHR. It is entirely their own fault if they do not. No terms are too clear or forcible for the Scriptures themselves to use in bringing us to a right understanding of what Christ was and is. If we desired, with all our command of modern languages and science, to define God, could we do it more expressly or energetically than in such terms as these: "By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; all things were created by him and for him: he is before all things, and by him all things consist."[1]

INF. Is that language applied to Christ?

CHR. Expressly to Him who has made peace by the blood of the Cross.

[1] Coloss. i. 16, 17.

INF. And you, as an orthodox Christian, do not shrink from maintaining that unless a man believes Christ, on His being preached to him as the object of faith, to be this eternal God incarnate, he must be damned?

CHR. Whosoever, on having Christ thus proposed to him, "as very God of very God," rejects Him as such, will be most assuredly damned. If Christ be God, and being God has for our salvation become "Jesus Christ crucified," how, in common-sense, can there be any other salvation accorded of God than in Him? What else but perdition can be the result of deliberately rejecting God in Christ crucified for us? Consider the "sham" to which the contrary opinion reduces Christianity.

INF. Ah! I see that.

CHR. And as an Infidel consistently wish it true. You wish it to be a safe procedure to reject Christianity, and if the crucified Saviour were not also your God—the God that made you, soul, mind, and body—you see it might possibly be a safe procedure. But if he be indeed your God, it strikes you instinctively that the rejection of your God, crucified to save you from the loathsomeness of sin, must be damnation. It cannot be otherwise. It is not sin, or any taint or act of sin, that now need damn any man whatever; for the pardon and expiation of such the atonement of God is provided, but for the rejection of that atonement, "sin" is not the right word; it is something ten thousand times—if such can be—worse than sin; it involves in the act itself the whole body, guilt, consummation, and final penalty

of sin, and doing so must in itself be damnation. It is not sin, but the rejection of Christ as God incarnate, crucified to save us from sin, that now damns a man.

INF. But it is not with such faith as this that your pulpits resound. "Justification by faith," not "faith in Christ crucified as the eternal God," appears to me the watchword of at least a large party in your Church. They put forward a feeling instead of a fact as the ground of man's justification. Faith as a feeling or faculty exists in every individual—heathen or Christian. The Turk has faith, but it is in Mohammed; the Tartar has faith, but in the Dalai-Lama; the Negro has faith, but in his fetish, which is perhaps a serpent; when I hear, therefore, faith insisted on as the *sine quâ non* of salvation, the preacher appears to me to be beating the air; he is insisting on the necessity of the existence of a feeling which does already exist in every human being. All have faith, but in *what* is a man to have faith? What is to be the objective being or fact of his faith? The Mohammedan faith has for its objective fact, the divine mission of Mohammed. His faith is often much more zealous, fervent, and self-impressive than that of a Christian; but the objective fact being false,—no fact at all,—the faith itself is also false—faith in a lie. So with other superstitions. Faith in a fallacy is superstition. When therefore an evangelical Christian harps to me continually on his one solitary string of "justification by faith," I demand what faith, faith in what specific external fact? Or is it justification by the mere feeling or faculty of

faith itself? Then are the Mohammedan and the Idolater equally justified with the Christian, for all have faith in the abstract, and if faith as a feeling justifies them, all are equally justified. Why then should I be a Christian rather than a Mohammedan? But you hold that it is not the mere feeling or faculty of faith, but the truth of the objective matter of faith, which constitutes the *sine quâ non* of justification.

CHR. Yes.

INF. Let me clearly understand. I have faith in Mohammed as a divinely-commissioned prophet. That faith being faith in a lie, is of no use, is vain.

CHR. Is most pernicious.

INF. I have faith in Jesus Christ as a divinely-commissioned prophet, but not as God. That faith, being faith in only part of the fact, is a *suppressio veri*, and of no salvatory efficacy.

CHR. None; the *verum* so suppressed is the very essential of the whole fact which makes faith in it the faith of salvation; that *verum* so suppressed is the grand truth which makes the faith holding it for its objective fact the true faith. All faiths in any other fact than this are, in reference to any salvatory virtue on the human soul, delusive and vain.

INF. Then the evangelical party have inflicted great damage on Christianity, by substituting the universal human feeling of faith for the objective Being and fact of the only true faith—a God-Saviour crucified.

CHR. I will not affirm so. The old Evangelicals took their stand in the midst of a Socinian and

earthly-minded generation on the Divine truths and doctrines of revelation. Imitators and mere partisans,—always "servile pecus,"—have copied their phraseology, and have thus imposed upon themselves and the world as Evangelicals.

INF. But however servile, is not their maxim, that "justification by faith" is the test of a falling or standing Church, historically correct?

CHR. The maxim was Luther's. What has become of the Lutheran churches on the Continent? They are either extinct or lapsed into congregations of Infidels. In the Lutheran sense not only is not the maxim true, but every sect that has held it in such sense has either disappeared, or apostatized to Infidelity or Socinianism.

INF. Does not your own Church hold the doctrine of justification by faith only?

CHR. In a very different sense from the Lutheran or the pseudo-evangelical acceptation. In the second part of the Homily of Salvation, our Church explains her meaning: "The true understanding of this doctrine, that we be justified freely by faith without works, or that we be justified *in Christ only*, is, that we must trust only in God's mercy, and that sacrifice which our High Priest and Saviour, *Christ Jesus, the Son of God*, once offered for us upon the cross, to obtain thereby God's grace and remission as well of our original sin in baptism, as of all actual sin committed by us after our baptism, if we truly repent and turn unfeignedly to Him again." The Lutherans lay the whole stress on "faith only" as an abstract faculty,—our Church on faith in no abstract sense

whatever, but in Jesus Christ only as the Son of God, offered for us upon the cross.

Inf. The difference is great and striking. But yet the Lutheran view is much the more comfortable of the two.

Chr. Perhaps so.

Inf. And the more liberal.

Chr. How so?

Inf. It makes the attainment of salvation more inclusive, co-extensive with the existence of the abstract feeling of faith in man; whereas you limit such attainment to one exercise and appropriation of that feeling; with you it must cease to be abstract, and none can be saved but such as receive Jesus Christ as the Incarnation of the eternal God for the sole object of their faith. Am I correct?

Chr. Every man, possessing faith as an internal power, has by its right exercise the possibility of salvation in his own hands. Salvation is thus possible to all: but they alone attain it who attach their faith to its proper object in the true character of that object. The same principle regulates the application of all other human faculties.

Inf. Observe then what a much more awful thing Christianity is made by you than it is by the Lutherans, or the Abstractionists, who teach that faith in Christ, without defining what Christ is, is sufficient to save.

Chr. Very true.

Inf. I am on an equality with man, and if Christ be man only, with Christ. Supposing His Crucifixion as man only to be an atonement, the effects are

divided among so many countless millions of souls, that my individual obligation to Him is reduced to an infinitesimal minimum. But if He be God, God has already made me what I am: He has, as it were, come upon me previously in my whole being: so that what Christ does for me as God in salvation is that which, as God, He has already previously done for me in creation. I thus come with my whole being, not in an infinitesimal proportion of it, into collision with Him.

Chr. Soundly argued.

Inf. But, as an Infidel, I do not, if there be a God, desire to come thus into either contact or collision with Him. Now God, as He is in the universe, says nothing whatever to me. He leaves me entirely to my own nature, as he leaves the horse, the ox, the tiger, to theirs. I abuse that nature just as I please, to this or that gratification of mind or body; I at last fall asleep, become insensible as the clay, and return to nothing; there is the end of nature and myself to me. But you bring in a God who speaks to me—who addresses Himself to me individually; a Word of God, which Word is itself also the creative and regenerative or sustaining power—which Word once did, and perhaps still does, create nature out of nothing. And He proffers to create *my* nature anew. But I am content with my nature: it satisfies me; I only wish its pleasures would last forever; I only desire to be ever young, ever rich, ever healthy, ever free, and that in such a world as the present. What can be more reasonable? But you present me, not

a mere man suffering, for whom would so common a matter as that affect? But the God who created me, crucified for me. Why! what is there in me, or my nature, which calls for any other but at the best a silent God? why a speaking God? why, above all, God in Christ crucified? An Infidel is much happier than a Christian. An Infidel sins, as you would term it, and by sinning probably shortens his life by a few years; what then? He has surely the right of doing what he pleases with himself. Nature pays its own penalty. What more should its Creator exact, what more is He entitled to? The Infidel is buried, feels nothing, turns to earth and grows corn for the next generation. In all this there is nothing to fear, —a man knows the worst, dust, unconsciousness, insensibility. Children play on your grave; what are they to you, or you to them, or to any other being in creation? what necessity is there you should be any thing? you are nothing. Is this Infidelity? No. It is taking nature and all things else as they really are, and being satisfied to take them as such. Infidelity is simply—realities; religion, simply—imagination. A hero resolves, "I will do a great act or die; death is merely insensibility, and this is the worst that can befall me. Well, I have exhausted all the 'sensibilities' which yield me the slightest pleasure, their loss will be trivial, and nothing more is death—which, therefore, is not to be compared to my gain, if this act succeeds." But Christianity utterly destroys such a spirit as this. A believer cannot argue in this way, he becomes a coward; death is only a transition to him,—after it come God, judgment, eternity. What

makes him a coward, but as Shakspeare says, "his conscience?" What is conscience but every man's own measure of knowledge? What, in nine out of ten cases, is a man's knowledge but what he is taught? Christianity seizes on every child and teaches it; the teaching becomes knowledge, knowledge conscience, and conscience the man. Now to be really great, a man must burst these fetters: the original meaning of the word "religion" itself, is "the bond, or that which holds a man back;" such bond once broken, the emancipated man goes free: he must be his own God, gospel, and church. How else, among the subtle but steel-strong meshes your religion weaves around our earliest prepossessions, can man attain independency of thought or action? Any religion at all is shackles and slavery.

CHR. I listen—and presently will reply.

INF. You cannot deny that religion, especially if driven into us when infants, fetters the whole future man. Not one in ten thousand ever liberates himself from his child-religion. It is associated with memories of their mother, their little brothers and sisters, their days of innocence, some good clergyman, holidays, and festivals; their first sensations, blessings over their nightly pillow with kisses and prayers, tremblings of their early hearts at catechisings, confirmation, first communions, and, if they have a clever priest to deal with, first confessions. They are turned out of this paradise into the world, and are roughly handled; they handle as roughly in return; they become for years thorough worldlings. Then ensues the reaction, and, as Solomon says, when they are

old, perhaps long before, they go right back into the way of their child-training: in it they educate their own children; they make a sacred conscience of it; if they would, they cannot think otherwise; to their death they remain their own childhood in religion. And if a person of liberal opinions argue with them on the folly of hereditary faith, he is ever after proscribed the family, and denounced as every thing impious and dangerous. See, then, the tyranny which Christianity exercises over a man's own conscience, over all other people's consciences, between my conscience and theirs; over this life, over the imaginations of the next life—over childhood, over maturity, over age. How can you, therefore, uphold such a system? Parts of it, I grant, may be well defended —but, as a whole, it is indefensible. Now, as you admit the whole strength of your religion to consist in the supposed fact that "Jesus Christ is God as well as man," it follows that whatever else I may believe Him to be—"the best of men," the holiest of saints—does not suffice: I must accept him as that tremendous Omnipotence, the portal of whose works human philosophy has scarcely yet entered—as the First Cause, so almighty that its volition alone is creation, is that which turns nothing into being. This volition is the Ὁ Λογος, Jesus Christ, the Word and Will of the Eternal. I must believe, accept, and confess Him as this, or my whole nature is out of harmony with the truth and order of God. I am, as stated, like a mote attempting rebellion against the universal law of gravitation. The revelation, "the Word" addressed to me convulses my nature: it stirs something within

me of the existence of which I was not before aware; it is like wakening a sleeping child from his bed. I do not know what that something is. It may be part of God: it may be my own fancy: it may be the devil. But when I have once heard that there is a future judgment, a hell, and that there is salvation from such hell in an Incarnate God, and that Jesus Christ is that God, the revolution in my being is half effected. Time, sickness, desertion, helplessness, hopelessness, will complete the subjugation. If you can once thus persuade me that Jesus Christ is the God who created, and now controls nature, you have me committed to the whole supernatural system of Christianity, with its priesthood as the ministry, and its services, ordinances, sacraments, as the ritual and channels of Christ.

Chr. How came—according to your ideas—the Incarnation of God in Christ to be the cardinal credendum of Christianity?

Inf. I account for it thus: I consider the apostles the first intellects in spiritual conspiracy and manly fortitude that have ever existed.

Chr. Some people think and talk of them as simple fishermen of Galilee.

Inf. They did nothing as fishermen; whatever they did, mentally or spiritually, they did as apostles. I despise the people who talk of them as fishermen —poor fishermen—humble fishermen of Galilee. It is a false way of speaking of them—they ceased to be fishermen before they were ordained by Christ to be apostles. They first left all—their secular occupation included—to follow Christ: not before

they had thus left all were they even received as disciples, much less commissioned with the apostolate and priesthood of Christ. And so the orthodox Church, following them, as they professed to follow Christ, will not now permit any priest or minister of hers to engage himself in any secular trade, calling, or business. This is part of that profound traditionary policy which she has derived from the Twelve. The Roman Catholic Church carries it out to such extremes as to reject every candidate for her priesthood who refuses to vow perpetual celibacy. Your own Church carries it out so far as to bind every candidate for her ministry to perpetual abstinence from any professed worldly business. The difference between you is one of degree only, not of principle—both of you derive it from the policy of the Apostolate. Fishermen, indeed! Saul, in his time, was a greater emperor than Nero—so in the East was Peter. The truth is, the apostles were originally military fanatics of the deepest and most crimson grain, impregnated to their hearts' core with the fierce spirit which habitually made Galilee the focus of all the religious insurrections against the Gentile dominion of Rome. They represent themselves as constantly inciting Jesus Christ to raise the standard of David, and proclaim the kingdom of Israel against the world in arms. And for this reason they are so punctilious in giving us a double genealogy of their leader, as uniting in his own person the double claims of law and of birth, to the rights and prerogatives of the house and lineage of David. It was in a military capacity they were

prepared to follow Christ as a military Messiah; they left the same spirit behind them among their countrymen in Galilee: it was Galilee that forty years afterwards rose against Rome, drew in the whole nation to rise with it, gave the rebellion its chiefs, and with all the mad dauntlessness of enthusiastic bigotry, fought the battle through till not one tribe was left of their race in Palestine, nor one stone upon another in Jerusalem. The apostles were men exactly of the same stamp; but their leader, Christ, was one who opened vaster and nobler views of ambition to them than the political command of a little oriental kingdom. He knew, however deeply fanaticism had blinded their perceptions, that the physical empire of Rome could not be overthrown by any force the East could at that period bring into the field against it. Any pretensions, therefore, which He might advance to a military Messiahship would, He perceived—even if accepted by the Jewish nation—be instantly tested and exposed by the summary defeat of Himself and his undisciplined followers. He elected, therefore, to be a spiritual Messiah—to revolutionize the intellectual and religious, instead of the political world. His superior strength of mind, and the extraordinary moral intrepidity which He possessed, completely brought round the apostles to His own views and designs. He fell, as He anticipated, the first martyr to His own cause; but He left surviving a band of men, each of them fully capable of supplying his place, and executing with the most unflinching courage the instructions for the foundation of this mighty spiritual empire, antagonistic to

all physical force or bodily violence, which He had bequeathed to them. They too, like Him, made up their minds to death in the cause: death came, but before it came they had firmly established such an empire, which they termed the Church, or the Gathering unto Christ—Ecclesia—in the very centre, and in every province of the old military domination which had so long swayed the earth. I thus, in the character of the apostles, sometimes seem to find the origin and success of Christianity explained. At other times I am more inclined to believe, with Strauss, that Jesus Christ never existed; that He is simply a myth, imagined and elaborated by the apostles for their own purposes of spiritual supremacy.

Chr. Yes. Infidelity is a very Proteus as to what it does and does not believe about Christ.

Inf. Be it so. I am an Infidel in the faith which the apostles taught, but I am an almost abject admirer of the apostles themselves.

Chr. Very singular again—that you should admire men to whose words you attach no credence or respect.

Inf. I admire the nerve and mental power with which, against enormous odds, they dared and achieved success. I can, therefore, go with a safe conscience to church on St. Peter's day. He was a hero: I venerate him as such, but I believe scarcely a sentence of what I hear in the church as attributed to St. Peter. The system they originated and taught was a pure illusion: Saul and Peter knew it to be so; but they also knew it to be just the illusion which human nature thirsted and craved after. They

idealized a suffering God, and in a suffering world the invention was hailed with a holy enthusiasm. One took the East; the other the West: both on the understanding that they were to meet at Rome, and by their deaths consignate and sanctify an eternal empire of persuasion and faith to mankind. The other apostles were subordinate to these two master-minds, but each and all possessed stainless honor towards each other, and invincible determination in the promotion of their common object. The partition of the inhabited world among themselves was effected at Jerusalem; each took possession of his own; each could appeal to the other in defence and corroboration of the same principles: all supported and stood by each other's pretensions. Peter, a few days before his crucifixion at Rome, is heedful to write to the whole Oriental Church about "his beloved brother Paul;" and Paul, in return, in writing to the Hebrews, more especially under Peter's supremacy, is equally heedful in reminding them "to obey them that have the rule over them, and to submit themselves." I revere such iron consistency of purpose, and unparalleled spirit in the founders of your Church. They overthrew the old Pagan world—and on this fact alone they must have been men of the first calibre in intellect and resolution.

CHR. And you believe they effected all this by their own power of mind alone?

INF. Yes. Why not? Great minds do effect miracles, and revolutionize the feelings and convictions of nations. They despised death. They saw common gladiators do so—half the Roman emperors also died violent deaths; why should they, the spir-

itual emperors, care to be exempt from it? Had they betrayed any shrinking from it, what became of their glorious theory of the life after death, of eternal joys and immortal crowns, with the Lord of life and death, in the painless and sinless heavens? For them not to have welcomed death, was death to their spiritual supremacy over the souls of their subjects. When I reflect on the number of temples erected and dedicated in every civilized country to the honor of these men, I am lost in amazement. Not one temple is there at this moment in all Europe dedicated to the gods of antiquity—not one to such conquerors as Alexander, Cæsar, Trajan, the Antonines; but there are, probably, in Christendom ten thousand temples consecrated and called after the names of each of these apostles—one hundred thousand, perhaps, to the whole Apostolate.

Chr. The Apostolate of a Christ who has never existed! Really, the miracles Infidelity proposes to our belief far transcend those of Christianity.

Inf. The more I consider this one fact, the higher rises my opinion of that intellect of the Twelve which laid the foundations of a spiritual empire resulting in this marvellous aggrandizement of the memory of its founders. A spiritual empire to which a hundred thousand temples pay daily the homage of matter in its highest forms of artistic beauty! Compared to any one of these apostles, Mohammed displayed no insight whatever into futurity. Mohammedanism vanishes before civilization and pure womanhood. The apostles guarded their religion against

all hostile contingencies of this kind. They so devised it as to conciliate and to win over all future generations of women—the virtuous by its sanctity, the fallen by its mercy. They took care not to commit it to this or that system of science, philosophy, or political government, but so drew it up that it should still and forever seem to be above and in advance of them all. And, as you observe, many millions really believe and venture their salvation—which is much more than any temporal interest—on the truth of the system these apostles had the mind to poetize, and the courage successfully to propose as a new conscience to mankind. But of all their engines, this doctrine, that the Jesus Christ they preached was God Incarnate, was the most powerful in its operations on the souls of men. Many councils were held before that was brought out in its present form.

Chr. Well; and how came they to adhere so inflexibly to it—never in the least degree to modify or permit, in any of the Churches they founded, any modification of it by others?

Inf. How came they? The reason is evident. Unless Christ was God, what right had they to preach at all? If Christ were mere man, what better was He than any other man, so far as authority to issue spiritual commission went? What authoritative commission to the soul of men could be issued, except from the Creator and Lord of the soul? If Christ was not that Lord, this commission convicted itself of invalidity. As man merely, He was a crucified rebel. The nature of any commission, spiritual or secular, from such a character, would not have

been admitted by the most ignorant Jew or heathen. The apostles were fully aware that, neither in themselves, nor yet in Christ, as mere man, could they have any such power as this. They therefore constituted themselves "ambassadors." From whom? From God. But Jupiter Tonans, God in thunder and force, had never touched suffering humanity; it must be from God in suffering. What suffering so acute, so ignominious, so recoiled from in shame and horror by all antiquity, as crucifixion? God Crucified became their authority. They came as ambassadors from a crucified God: far more—crucified in order to be the Saviour of sufferers. To such an appeal human nature succumbed. It only hardened and marbled itself against a force or vengeance God; but against God suffering its own worst pains and deprivations, to save it from an eternity of like pain and joylessness, it had no resistance to offer: the marble melted into tears; it preferred worshipping the Cross to any throne in heaven or earth beside; for the cross was itself; Christ on the cross was its own suffering deified. All this was foreseen by the apostles. They knew the fatal defect which existed in all the religions of their time—especially in all the heathen mythologies. They invented a better mythology, and to give it a human heart, they concentrated all its teachings and appeals into Jesus Christ, as the God-sympathizer with all suffering. Under Him they foresaw they themselves, His ambassadors, would inevitably become the Dii Minores of Christendom—of the new religious future. They are so become: and perhaps may remain so

for another two thousand years. I affirm that such historical celebrities as Cæsar, Charlemagne, Napoleon, are only the empty bubbles of an hour when contrasted with such dynastic permanencies, such spiritual potentates, as the twelve "men of Galilee." Looking at the effects they have produced, we must pronounce their College a thing altogether unique in the world; nothing in history resembles it or them. And as long as human nature remains what it is, they also will probably remain the kings and priests of soul. Are you surprised at this view of the apostolical founders of your Church?

CHR. Not at all—it is quite consistent with the hero-worship of modern Infidelity.

INF. In what respect?

CHR. In making "success" the test of heroism. You think the apostles consciously preached falsehood, but because the falsehood has met with unparalleled "success," you admire them as "unparalleled heroes"—quite unique—things by themselves in the world.

INF. I am speaking of their intellectual power.

CHR. To which Moloch you appear, to me, to sacrifice all claims on their part to moral integrity.

INF. Let me proceed. I account, in the second place, for this doctrine of the Incarnation being made the basis of Christianity, because no other doctrine is so well adapted to form the crown of that system of adulation of human nature, which in reality Christianity is. Do I now surprise you?

CHR. In no degree. It is only a new view of Christianity, and new views of Christianity are in

these days as common as printing-presses. But I shall be obliged to you to explain yourself further.

INF. It flatters me to be told that I have something within me immortal; that this "immortal" particle is part of the Deity, and ought to be as pure as He; that, polluted or unpolluted, death may affect its condition, but not its existence; that if it does not live forever with God, its origin, it still will with Satan, its seducer. Thus even life with Satan is life forever: that is better than annihilation or nothingness. All this Christianity delivers; and what is it all but the most superb but delicate flattery of human nature? When I am told it, I am disposed to believe it. My being in any way immortal exalts my view of myself. Presently I begin to see death in quite another light. Without Christianity I might —as I stated—try to become a hero; but supposing I succeeded in being so, it would only be, after a few years, a dead hero. With Christianity I, in one sense, die—in another, I conquer death. A hero can destroy life: so can a beast, a shark, a tiger, a nail, a drop of poison—the vilest thing in nature has such hero-power as this; but a Christian destroys death. By becoming a Christian I am above all death-power in earth, heaven, or hell—for I become part of Him who is Life itself. What is all heroism in its results, compared to this completeness of a victory the effects of which are co-infinite with eternity? Less than nothing. As long as God lives, I, being part of Him, must live also. As the sun gathers light unto itself, so He has, through Christ, gathered me unto Himself. No dream of poetry ever matched such a

vision of immortality as Christianity thus presents to the eye of faith. But it is all an illusion: the vanity of human nature accepts the illusion as the most gratifying, the most intoxicating incense ever offered at its shrine—and thus Christianity is the adulation of man.

Chr. If these statements of Christianity were true, then I presume you would, with us, admit it to be not the adulation but the exaltation of human nature. It is the truth or falsehood of these doctrines which, in their application, constitutes the difference between adulation and exaltation.

Inf. Very true—and being, as I think, false, I apply to Christianity the term of systematic adulation. Seriously, do you believe me immortal?

Chr. What do you believe yourself?

Inf. I rarely think about it at all. I feel myself indifferent to immortality. I am more attached to my estate, my family, my horses, my pleasures, my political interests, than to any consideration of self-eternity. I do not wish for immortality. And yet I do not withhold the confession that the same Christianity which flatters my vanity, terrifies my soul. If I thought God spoke to me individually, I know not what I should do. But the supposition is monstrous. Suppose He did create nature: He leaves it, once made, to its own laws and properties: so He leaves us, once made, to the laws of our own nature. Not so, your Christianity exclaims: God no more leaves you, once created, to yourself, than you, a father, leave your child, once born, to itself. Thus you trouble me—whatever inorganic nature may be

supposed to suggest, sensitive nature favors your comparison. "And God—Jesus Christ—is the Father of that soul within you which will not permit you to abandon to itself, in utter hopelessness, the child of your love. What you feel towards your child, God feels towards you—only you are more helpless towards heaven, your true home, than your little babe is towards this world, its temporary home." So far your faith is a species of profound courtiership towards the aristocratical weakness innate in man. But you proceed further, so as to change this aspect of kindness into one of terror—the very depth of the humiliation of Christ infuses strange sensations of awe and fear into the soul. Who condescends? Christ, the Ὁ Λογος Himself,—the King of Angels, the Lord of Hosts, the Majesty of Heaven, the Fulness of Infinity, the Everlasting Father, the Disposer of the Destinies of Eternity! And to whom? To me. If I believed Him such, I would prostrate myself as the threshold for His feet: my lowest submission would, in reality, be my highest elevation. Thus the apostles reasoned. Christ, once acknowledged as Creator, must be acknowledged also as the re-Creator. He that made the soul, can regenerate it: He that made the mind can purify, refine, enlarge, ennoble it: He that gave life to the dust, can give the body, so made out of the dust, everlasting life. What reasoning can be more natural, more apt to take with the mass of mankind? The propositions seem so rational that it requires no small effort to refuse assent to them. To Jesus Christ, therefore, thus held forth as God, the application of the word

"impossible" would be sheer nonsense. Thus, also, they evolved the principle of prayer. Is your heart wicked? Have you passions you cannot yourself subdue? Have you a conscience uncleansed and self-accusing? Are you dead to heavenly-mindedness? Have you a desire, but no power for holiness? Pray to Christ: resign your soul to Him: confess to Him the consciousness of your wants and deficiencies: He is God, and can do all things: He is your Saviour, and will do all things for your salvation from sin, and your perfection to holiness. Granting the premises, what logic can be clearer or firmer than this? Each link still follows the last as a chain of pure reason. When God, in Christ, comes to me as a sufferer for my sake, what can be denied Him? When I, a sufferer, go to God my Saviour, what will He deny me? Genuine, unfeigned faith in this cardinal credendum —the Divinity of the crucified Saviour—carries with it, and works out all the rest of Christianity by its own power. Hence the apostles made it the "rock" of the faith: hence, though a man were moral, kind, generous, self-denying, pious, a Paul in the law, a Peter in the rigor of the circumcision, all short of the acceptance of this tenet, was cast aside, rejected, spurned. The point was, "Do you, in your heart, believe, and will you, before the world, confess that Jesus Christ, who suffered for you on the shameful cross, was the Son of the living God?" And from this point your orthodox Catholic Church has never shrunk or receded. People began to palter and say, "I believe Jesus Christ was the Son of God, in a certain sense." Forthwith the Church of the apos-

tles, full of their spirit, and possessed of their hereditary mind, instantly intensified her creed—"God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, by whom all things were made." What strength of action! what decision! what contempt of conciliation! what an uplifting of the banner! what a true appreciation of the impregnability of their spiritual position! I admire, with all my soul, the stern, unyielding, obdurate orthodoxy that has thus for eighteen centuries battled with and conquered reason, science, philosophy, kings, nations, governments. You may well call it "Apostolical"—for orthodoxy breathes the very heart-breath of the apostles. Not a verse is there in their Epistles to the Church which does not glow with the fire of orthodoxy. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your houses, neither bid him God speed." I am intellectual: I bow down to intellectual superiority—to nothing else. Apostolical orthodoxy is the most astounding triumph of far-seeing intellect over nature, mankind, coarse reasoning, and coarser violence, that the world has witnessed; but then "The lie—the lie of it, Horatio."

CHR. You admit that if Christ be God, Infidelity is not only the blackest sin of the soul against God, but is necessarily perdition.

INF. Yes.

CHR. If Christ be not God, to what power do you attribute the success of Christianity?

INF. To apostolic intellect.

CHR. Then what becomes of Infidel "intellect,"

which has thus everywhere succumbed to apostolic intellect?

INF. The apostles themselves were infidels. Do you not understand?

CHR. Pardon me—it is difficult. The apostles infidels!

INF. Decidedly. An Infidel, in listening to their Scriptures, is often so perplexed as to how far he believes or disbelieves, that he retires upon this supposition as the readiest solution which presents itself. He hears one verse, and exclaims, "What an absurdity!" He hears another, and cries, "How very true! The very feeling I experience." He prefers, therefore, dealing *en masse* with the whole subject of the apostles and their Scriptures. He accepts the apostles as the clearest-minded impostors of any age or time. He repudiates the Scriptures, considering them the record agreed upon among themselves to be passed off upon the external world. Their ratiocination was—"Intellect will contemn the Scriptures, but it will bow down to the living confederacy of the Church. Simplicity will not understand the Church, but it will think it understands the Scriptures and will confide reverentially in them. The Church, therefore, for intellect—the Scriptures for honest and ignorant faith."

CHR. But surely such a system as your vision thus conjures up from the realms of nonentity is long since defunct.

INF. Not so. The Pope of Rome has, I believe, at this day in his possession at the Vatican, the scheme of Peter and Paul for the subjugation of

both the intellect and principle of the world. Has not the Czar the scheme of another Peter for the conquest of the West, by the union of force and policy? Observe how the Papacy has carried the scheme out in the kingdoms which acknowledge its sway. See how your own Church has been pervaded by the same spirit. In despite of your sham humility and toleration, if the Divinity of your founder be in the remotest degree called into question, such men as Clarke, Priestley, Newman, are *ipso facto* expelled and excommunicated. If Hoadly touches this "apple of your eye,"—though Hoadly be a Hanoverian bishop,—lo! your lower House of Convocation will endure no trifling on this vital point from crown or bishop. It draws up articles of impeachment, and shows itself prepared to engage king, parliament, or people on this apostolical position. For which reason it has never since been permitted to transact ecclesiastical business. Thus the State of England thoroughly appreciates and guards against the development in action of your faith in Christ Jesus as God. This faith, once settled in you—not pretended, but forming the honest conviction of your conscience—you of the nineteenth century become, under its operation, as fanatic and insane as the mediæval knights and Templars, who gave up land and life for the defence of the Holy Sepulchre. Am I not correct, then, in affirming that the apostles, in inventing the Divinity of Jesus Christ, forged the most invincible and burning bond that has ever chained or fired the human heart?

Chr. You desire to transfer the cause of the

success of Christianity, in its temporal and spiritual aspects, from the Divinity of Christ to the intellectualism of the apostles. I do not deny the massive intellect of the apostles. To speak of them as if they performed a single spiritual or authoritative act in their abandoned capacity of fishermen, is a ludicrous error. As apostles, commissioned with the gospel and power of Christ, not as fishermen, they overcame the heathen world. But as for the human heart, was that the objective matter the apostles worked upon?

INF. Yes.

CHR. By adulation?

INF. Yes; a superb, a Divine adulation.

CHR. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."[1] The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."[2] Are these statements of Christ and St. Paul very flattering, think you, to the human heart? Your Infidelity can certainly, in this charge, claim the merit of novelty.

INF. But surely to affirm that I am an immortal soul is flattery.

CHR. What! flattery if it be a truth?

INF. But it is not a truth, it is a sublime delusion;

[1] Matt. xv. 19. [2] Gal. v. 19–21.

and as the whole system of Christianity rests objectively on the presumed fact of this immortality of the soul, Christianity itself is equally a delusion. We have here again one of these statements of your faith which, from the very magnitude of their audacity, confound the nerve of philosophy. Every day we see men buried and crumbling to dust. What avails it? Every day Christianity, over the very dead dust it treads upon, sounds the same eternal defiance to our senses, "I am the resurrection and the life, whosoever believeth in me shall never die." And mankind permit their senses to be conquered; they give in helplessly: they pluck out their very eyes and give them to Christ. Of what use is it for reason, science, philosophy, to attempt to instruct or enlighten such creatures, such a race as this? Every effort is confronted and baffled by this never-ceasing monotone of the Church. Deliver them from Rome, they fall into your power; rescue them from you, they are captured by Dissent. You complain of want of "faith" in people. Why the amount and crass solidity of "faith" in England, on the Continent, in the world, is greater than it is well possible to conceive. Land at Calais, travel on a thousand miles direct to Gibraltar or Sicily, through the countries of the faith of Rome. What they do not believe may be expressed more briefly than what they do believe, such is the vast length, depth, and breadth of this faith, from the infallibility of the Pope to the canonization of Germaine Cousin, the last goddess of the Roman Olympian Calendar. Return to our own country. You may, in many provincial towns, walk through the streets between

the hours of eleven and one on the Sunday, and fail to meet a human being in them. Where are they? In the churches and chapels, going through a worship entirely of "Faith." The believing powers of mankind are unfathomable and inexhaustible. Rome will never be able to invent what they will be found incapable of believing. The experiment has been tried, and she knows she is far from having yet sounded the bottom of the faith-capacity in man. Protestants aver that if they could once bring themselves to believe transubstantiation, they could easily accept all the other dogmas of Rome. I, an Infidel, aver that if I could once believe the immortality of the soul, I could accept all the dogmas of all the sects of Christianity without further demurrer. If I could once swallow the camel, why should I pause at the gnat? Men die in millions: not one of these millions ever return. My senses prove as clearly to me the non-immortality of man, as the senses of Protestants prove to them the non-transubstantiation of the elements. But of what use are the senses against your faith? Roman Catholic and Protestant alike absolutely annul their evidence. A Roman Catholic would deem it a sin of the deepest dye to believe his senses that bread was bread, and wine wine, against the faith of His Church: a Protestant would deem it as great a sin to believe his senses that dust is dust, death death, mortality mortality, against the faith of his Church or sect. The difference here also, as in other respects to which we have referred, is really only one of degrees of faith; the Protestant as truly, though not to the

same extent, ignores his own senses as the Roman Catholic does. Persuade me to believe against my senses, against the senses of all mankind, which testify to man's entire mortality—body and spirit—that he is immortal, and I should consider all other doctrines of Rome or England as so many small gnats following after the camel. But you undertake to prove this immortality of the soul.

CHR. By no means.

INF. But you firmly believe it?

CHR. Certainly. If I could prove or demonstrate it mathematically, it would be an article of science, not of faith. Christianity is not mathematics, but a faith: it is a thing between God and the soul, not between man's mind and matter.

INF. It ought to be founded on as clear and true propositions as mathematics are.

CHR. Why so it is, and on much truer propositions. Compared to Christianity the whole science of mathematics is a system of logical illusions, having no further existence than the mind imagines for them.

INF. This is a stranger assertion than any I have yet heard,—Christianity truer than mathematics!

CHR. The whole science of mathematics rests on its definition of a "point." And that definition is an immaterial nonentity which nowhere exists in nature. And the whole science built upon it is as its foundation, the logical but baseless fabric of the mental vision. Conceded its postulates and axioms, you cannot withhold your consent from the inferences the mind evolves from them. But of these

the axioms have only a mental existence, and the postulates are impossible of proof. Mathematics, in fact, are of all the arts and sciences, poetry not excluded, the most merely mental and visionary. It is the science of logical sequences from imaginary premises. You, like other advocates of mathematics who quote them in an antagonistic spirit to Christianity, confound the certainty of the mental deductions from the premises with the supposed certainty of the premises themselves; whereas, the premises, so far from having certainty of existence, have no existence at all; for where will you find existent in matter or nature the mathematical line, "length without breadth?" The whole science is a pure mental conception, having no external existence. And if you judge it by the facts of external existences, it is a pure illusion—a lie, as Carlyle would call it—from beginning to end. And yet you would compare this visionary logic of points and lines, which have no existence in nature, with Christianity, that science of the soul, founded on the greatest of all existences, God,—and proved to be the truth of God by more external as well as internal evidences than any man's mind can at one time command and contain. Mathematics constitute a valuable mental exercise, but it would be less irrational to compare fencing with health, than such an exercise with the life of the soul. But meanwhile, what is that soul that has thus power to evolve out of itself this and many other systems of erudition and science?

Inf. Evolves out of itself?

Chr. Certainly; for you will not, I suppose, deny

that the soul in man precedes knowledge of all kinds in man; the whole science of logic was in the soul of Aristotle before that soul evolved and worked it out in external order and typing. The soul is the source and origin of all sciences. Supposing them to-morrow obliterated from the records of the world, one soul surviving would contain the germ of the regeneration of all of them. The soul has in itself the power of receiving the truth-impressions of the whole universe. The truth-impressions of the material world we call science; the truth-impressions of the higher or spiritual world we call Christianity. The great blunder committed by Infidelity is, that acknowledging the lesser, it is blind to the greater order of facts. It acknowledges mathematics, but is blind to the soul in which alone mathematics exist; it acknowledges nature, but is blind to the God in whom alone nature exists.

INF. But to predicate immortality of man is to ask belief in an idea controverted and falsified by the mortality of every man that dies.

CHR. How so? How long is it since Adam lived in the flesh?

INF. About five thousand eight hundred years.

CHR. The life of Adam still lives in you; it has never yet died; nay, more, it not only lives, but it has propagated itself, life of life, in about eight hundred millions of present souls in the world. Here is a multifold duration of fifty-eight centuries for the principle of life in man.

INF. But that is not immortality.

CHR. True: still less is it mortality. Every in-

dividual in this chain is clearly a partaker of that which, even in this world, so far as facts yield evidence, possesses the power of imperishable perpetuity.

INF. Well, this imperishable power enters a certain individual organization, animates it for seventy years; the organization dissolves into its primitive elements; with that dissolution the individuality also dissolves: the power which animated it mingles again with its own imperishable source, the pervading Soul of the universe.

CHR. Is that Power which thus animates the human material organization above the effects of its dissolution, or not? Does it die with the dissolution of its form?

INF. Ah! but that is an awful mystery which none but Omnipotence itself can know; I am speaking of the immortality of the individuality of man. Man is body as well as this soul; if the soul-principle be immortal, that will not make man, as man, immortal. The body is the bubble on the ocean; the soul is the light of heaven within that bubble: the bubble bursts and subsides into the ocean; the light within by the very fact of that bursting is released and again united with the Universal Light—call it God or aught you please. That Universal Light, and the Light within the bubble as part of it, may be immortal, but the union of that individual bubble with that individual portion of the universal light is not immortal. Now you, in your Creed, hold the immortality of the individual man, "I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting." You hold, in fact,

the individual identity of man to be eternal, leaving, as far as I understand your religion, the restoration of this identity to God. So that the immortality you teach is not simply an immortality of the soul-principle, but of the individual man himself in his present unity of that soul-principle with an incarnate body. How can you ask me to believe in the immortality of that union which thousands of instances prove every day to be mortal?

Chr. You appear to grant the existence of an imperishable principle in man; but its material instrumentalism once dissolved, you deny it can ever re-animate the same resuscitated instrumentalism again. The soul may be immortal, but its immortality does not necessarily imply the immortality of that union of itself with body which we call man.

Inf. Just so. The Soul in man being a particle of the Soul of the Universe, may, as you observe, hold latent in itself the knowledge of the whole universe. All the science which accrues to it in its present bodily media of the senses may be received by it—however novel to the senses themselves—as only reminiscences of its past self. The novelties of the soul may be merely in the senses: when they are exhausted, the same soul departs to animate other existences, or it returns to the great body of soul which vivifies creation. To itself nothing is new. In man all knowledge appears to be nothing more than the evolution of the soul into its own pure original state: this effected, it casts off its skin, and rejoins the Parental Soul of the Universe.

Chr. But this statement of yours is not Infidel-

ity—it is that near approach to Christianity which, from the great Greek philosopher, we call Platonism: and Platonism in this respect is "not far" from the truths of the kingdom of God. Do you deny the immortality of the soul itself?

Inf. Infinite difficulties embarrass that question. Something in man evidently is eternally restless within him. The peasant is not satisfied with attaining his farm, nor Alexander with attaining the world. Something does exist in man which matter cannot satisfy—all the conquest of matter by it is merely fuel to be consumed in a quenchless and insatiable flame. Then the men who listen to this God within themselves are the great characters of time and history. Something, again, outside of the soul appears to consider it its child, and, on the soul despising all matter, and casting itself back from this temporary exile and incarnation into its bosom, to impart its own omnipotence of power to it. I do not, therefore, well see how I can deny immortality to some principle in man. Thus the very oldest man is always looking forward; the centenarian will talk of what he will do next year. Your clergy din into our ears our insensibility to our own mortality. I stated, every grave refutes the idea of man himself being immortal: yet when I see every man returning from that grave, and verily in his heart saying "Amen" to the words of the Church, "Whosoever believeth in me never dies," I am confronted by a greater fact in the soul of man than I meet in the grave. The soul of man is insensible to mortality: it does not appear to consider the mortality of the

body to concern itself at all, and when Jesus Christ comes to it, saying, "I am the Life Eternal," it receives it as a matter-of-course truth; Christ is the enunciation of itself. The contempt which many nations have felt a pride in manifesting for death never could have existed, except in the consciousness of possessing a deathless principle in themselves. Now the founder of your religion elicited and evolved this principle to a degree unparalleled before His time. Being an intellectual Infidel, I yet see many points in the character of Jesus Christ, which mere intellectualists have never had the courage to exemplify in their own career and actions. The man who proclaimed, "The hairs of your head are numbered,"—"Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without my Father's will," opened a view never before imagined of what I may designate the minute, the microscopic omnipotence of God. But when he preached, "Fear not them which can destroy the body, but after that have no more that they can do;" and consistently with His own preaching gave His body, without fear, to the cross, I at once perceive that it is not the doctrine only, but the profound faith of the man in His own doctrine—His exemplifying the faith of His own soul by offering Himself, His own body, in evidence of His own sincerity in that faith,—which convulsed, first the Jewish, then the heathen religions. I will not permit you, therefore, to quote the sublime character and acts of Christ, as a verification for the truth of His doctrines. No man ever so much despised the conventionalities of His time: no man so dared to identify Himself with the outcasts of society: no man seemed to have His oracle of

action so completely within Himself: no man to look forward with a steadier eye to the Cross as the issue of His career. I admit all this. If, with Newman, I deprecated His moral, I feel it could only be to exalt His political character. In this man, therefore, there clearly existed some principle which enabled Him to feel Himself above mortality. What was that? You affirm Him to be God as well as man. In that case both the soul of man and the self-eternity of Deity were united in His person. But then comes also the consideration, what is that in man which God Himself underwent such humiliation to redeem? Thus from Christ we are driven back to the consideration of something in man for which Christ averred He sacrificed Himself as Christ—His own union of God and matter. I am thus involved in inextricable perplexities—for this sacrifice of the mere body by this man, Christ, has been responded to for His sake by thousands of others: something in them exists, similar to what existed in Him—and that I conclude to be the consciousness of deathlessness. So far I might, perhaps, not disagree with Christianity; but when you proceed to assert the doctrine of deathless individuality, and, as necessarily connected with it, the doctrine also of individual responsibility, I become again a complete and confirmed Infidel. I will grant you the abstract truth of the immortality of the soul, provided you grant me the non-responsibility of the individual man. I will be content to admit the soul-principle in man to be immortal, if you will admit the identity of man—as soul and body—not to be immortal!

Chr. I perfectly understand you. You have no

objection to Christianity merely as a philosophy, but you have the strongest objection to it reduced to action as a reality. The immortality of the soul is a grand doctrine: but the individual responsibility of the soul to God,—ah! that is a frightful superstition! that you can never admit! That is Christianity. Is it not so?

Inf. Yes; it is so.

Chr. The immortality of the soul would not, in fact, trouble you at all. The individuality of that immortality implies also the probability—nay, almost the certainty of future judgment. You here see how far beyond Platonism Christianity goes. Platonism stops just short of the point where the immortality of the soul becomes a practical bearing upon man: Christianity takes it up at that point, proclaims that immortality to be an indivisible identity, and presents it before the throne of God for judgment.

Inf. And you go still further. The tenement now inhabited by the soul will, according to your Creed, be reorganized from the dust; with it the soul will be clothed upon again—such union will reconstitute the identity of the man, and this union, this identity will never again be dissolved. Thus you teach, not the immortality of the soul only, but of man in his individual identity of soul and body united. This is the nature of the life everlasting as defined by Christianity. You carry me thus, not in one part only, but in my whole,—"I," or "Ego," the indivisible self,—to render an account of my actions to God. It is not the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob only,

which are in the kingdom of heaven, but Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob themselves. It is not the soul of Christ which sits at the right hand of God, but the full identity of Christ Himself. The apostles, in this way, by making individual identity eternal, riveted a nail in the human soul of each individual, which, once driven home in early life, no power of philosophy or science can ever afterwards stir or extract. This doctrine, once admitted, that of amenability to God and judgment necessarily followed. Now with Platonism, or the philosophy which, teaching the immortality of the soul, rejects, or stops short of the immortality of the man-self, I have nothing to anticipate or apprehend hereafter. Let my soul be immortal,—it is a sublime doctrine: if that alone be immortal, then the "I," the "self," the identity, the man I now am, once dissolved, cannot be reidentified —consequently "I," as the man-self, can never be judged. This is an easy, consolatory philosophy, leaving us to do much as we please, without fear of future consequences. Yours is the very reverse: it disturbs and agitates a man's whole being, for it makes that whole being in its self-identity an immortal responsibility. Thus I again arrive at the vast superiority of the Apostolic over the Platonic intellect. Plato dreamed an Utopia which never could exist for his kingdom: the apostles have founded a Church, existent everywhere in despite of all the facts of mortality and sense, for their kingdom. But I do not, for all their success, believe their dogmas. I admire and appreciate their intellect, but I repudiate their faith. Why not, with the philosophy of

Plato, be satisfied with the immortality of the soul alone?

Chr. We do not even proceed, as to the fact of the immortality of the soul, upon the same ground with philosophy. Supposing, for instance, the soul not previously to be immortal, we should still hold that the Word of Christ, addressed to and received by it, would then and thereby make it immortal. Supposing it to have no immortality in itself, it has immortality in Christ. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord,"—these and similar emanations of the living Word to our souls, render, in our judgments, all philosophic discussion about the immortality of the soul unnecessary and superfluous. If the soul be immortal, what at first made it so? The Word of God. Here in Christ, we have that very Word, both announcing and giving immortality to the soul. If philosophy could demonstrate the fact of its immortality, that immortality could only have originated, and must be traced back to the power of the very same Word, the assurance of whom on the subject we have already revealed and pledged to us in the Scriptures. That Word is infinitely more satisfactory to us, than any inductions or imaginations of our own, which we might be pleased to dignify with the title of philosophy. I do not, therefore, trouble myself as to whether my soul is by nature mortal or immortal. The Scriptures everywhere, expressly or inferentially, teach its immortality. If they did not do so, if it had not pleased God to have at first created it immortal, it

pleases Him now to give it immortality. Practically to me, as a believer in Christ, the question either way resolves itself into the same issue. By the power of the Word, either at my creation or my regeneration, I am an immortal soul. The question may not so resolve itself to a non-believer, or to one who has never received the power of the Word of God. They may be, I am not, personally interested in the native immortality of the soul.

INF. But, according to your Creed, the soul, or rather the identity of the wicked, is as eternal as that of the righteous.

CHR. Certainly; but were it not so, the fact would in no way affect my own immortality as received from the Word of God. Let them be mortal to whom the Word has not come, or who have rejected the Word; I, to whom it has come, and by whom it has been received, am immortal. The negation of immortality in them in no way annuls its reality as the gift of God in Christ to me. If it pleases God to make a distinction between us, it is no more than an extension of the distinction He has in many antecedent, though inferior respects, already made between man and man, between man and the beasts. My salvation is secured. It is for the infidel and the wicked to reflect whether the nature of the soul itself already renders it an impossibility or not for it to escape coming, some time or other, face to face with God. If it be by nature immortal, it must, some time or other in the cycles of eternity, have to do with God—with the Word of God. Why, then, not cast itself now upon Him as Christ, its refuge and its

Saviour? Seeing it must some time or other come to God, wherefore not now, when God calls it—calls it in loving-kindness and mercy?

Inf. But mark! Christ comes to me; I reject Him. If my soul were not before immortal, His coming perhaps gives it immortality, only it is an immortality for pain and evil. Before He came, temporal penalties sufficed for the degree of sin committed; the man, therefore, himself was, perhaps, mortal, not an immortality. But now God in Christ has come, the sin of rejecting Him can only be adequately punished by adding the curse of immortality to the sinning soul,—in other words, all other sins than the rejection of Christ have only temporal penalties, as in the old law, attached to them. But the rejection of Christ Himself, being as we observed something different in its very kind and nature from all sin as mere infractions of law, has an eternal penalty attached to it. His very coming, therefore, to the wicked, may create and leave upon them that capability of eternal sufferance which did not before exist. Breaking God's law is clearly a venial offence compared with rejecting God Himself: the one, God can and does readily forgive; the other seems to bring upon itself an eternizing of its own evil, for in rejecting God we reject also all that God alone can do for us. The coming of the living Word upon the soul, therefore, would, according to one view of your religion, be of itself creative to it of immortality; but whether that immortality so created would be one of misery or bliss, would depend entirely on the soul's acceptance or non-acceptance of Him as the

Son of the living God. Thus your faith is wholly independent of the question of the native immortality of the soul. Christ carries with Him, to whomsoever He comes, immortality; no soul to whom He comes has the option of remaining mortal, supposing it to be so by nature: all the option it has is an immortality in heaven or hell; this, I conceive, is what Paul meant in stating the Gospel to be either life to life, or death to death. Observe the profoundness of the Apostolic sagacity here again: they say nothing to this or that school of philosophy about the native immortality of the soul; they do not trouble themselves about it; if immortal, and believed so, well and good; half their work of conversion is already effected. If not immortal, they will make it so; the only Being by whom it could be, originally or now, immortal, is made to come by them in His Power upon it; that mortality of the soul on which an Infidel might throw himself, and defy eternity, is, by this act of Christ, made to him an impossibility; his strongest fortress becomes his dungeon; that whereby he trusted to escape God, becomes, by this Word of Power, the very thing that delivers him up for eternal judgment to God. It is no wonder the mass of mankind cannot compete with a system constructed at all points with such extraordinary subtlety and prevision as this. It foresees and guards against every weakness of which philosophy was ever guilty, yet it commits itself to no philosophy whatever; it speaks of it in terms of scorn and contempt; it presumes to have within itself, independent of all nature and all philosophy, a power to change

at its touch the corruption of the grave into the inconsumability of hell—the perishableness of man into the glory and immortality of God. The very vastness of its claims cows and overpowers all ordinary minds; the wonderful forethought which presided over its birth and constitution, renders it most difficult to advance any objections against it with such effect as to liberate such minds from the fear and thraldom it imposes upon them. It persuades them that its Head, Jesus Christ, has power at pleasure to change mortality into immortality, and immortality into heaven or hell. Men say, "Possibly it is true—possibly; at any rate, 'tis best to be on the safe side;" so they become Christians. The wisdom of the Church in thus never relaxing her faith in Christ as God, is virtually justified by all such characters becoming her children, by the very success of the system of which the Divinity of Christ is both the foundation and the keystone. But you affirmed the Scriptures everywhere expressly or inferentially teach the immortality of the soul; is the correctness of your assertion so certain in regard to the Old Testament?

CHR. Permit me to read in reply the following passage on the subject.

"In what sense did Adam understand the promise of restoration in the woman's seed, or what sense had it at all, except on the pre-understood fact of the immortality of his own and his children's souls? What consolation to a creature merely mortal would the assurance convey that, after he had ceased to exist, the serpent's power would be destroyed, and only the body of man suffer the

consequences of sin? If the body were the whole of man, such a promise would be valueless both in future to Adam, and after his departure *in præsenti* to his sons; for in such case, to Adam there would be no future, and to his sons as to Himself the 'bruising of the heel,' the extinction of the body, would be total extinction. In what sense, again, could the Patriarchs understand the promises connected with a futurity, except on the same pre-understanding of their own existence in futurity? Otherwise, of what advantage would the verification of God's promise be to them personally, or what present consolation and support could their faith with reference to its future realization afford? Did Balaam, again, fully understand the meaning of the parable put into his mouth by the Almighty? Was he conscious of the literal truth of the words, 'I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh?' Either he did, and therefore like ourselves knew the immortality of the soul; or the Scriptures are a series of truths, intelligible each in its own appointed time, not absolutely at once, but in the period and with the circumstances previously appointed of God. Both may be true. Could Job, again, except under the same conviction of immortality, assert, 'In my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold, and not another?' The Psalms and the prophets abound with express declarations of the eternal existence of the 'inward man.' In captivity Daniel could not have received such a plain declaration as the following, without knowing, as we do, the soul's immortality: 'Many of them that sleep in the dust

of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.' 'Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.' There are again innumerable passages, dispersed through the Old Testament, inexplicable, except as addressed to persons as well assured of their own immortality as they were of the existence of God. What signification can be attached to such prophecies as this, similar ones to which occur in almost every chapter of the evangelical prophets: 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy king cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation. As for thee also (addressing the king), I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit where is no water,'—except on the pre-acknowledgment of the soul's immortality? Two consequences follow: the first, that this immortality, being the basis on which God acted on the souls of men under the law and the prophets, was placed in its full and true light by our blessed Lord; He alone is our Immortality in the sense in which God gave the promises to the Fathers. As He existed before the foundations of the world, so in Him existed the soul's immortality, restored to its original state of union with God. That the patriarchs knew the fact of their immortality, and constantly anticipated a return from the world of their fall to the first home of the soul, is, as St. Paul shows, clear from their faith and lives, neither

of which, except on this ground, admit of explanation. It is quite consistent with this conviction that they should remain ignorant of the definite nature of that immortality, of the very way of their restoration, of the exact fulfilment by which the Almighty would again open to them the gates of heaven. They believed God upon the fact itself; that belief being implicit, a belief also in God's own appointed way of salvation was the righteousness of faith in Christ which became to them salvation. By this faith they were justified. The promise was explicit; the mode of its realization God reserved to Himself; into this mode the fathers inquired not, 'for who by searching can find out God?' They lived and died in full faith that they should see the day of salvation, leaving, in the same full faith, the way and the means to the truth and omnipotence of God. Our Lord tells us such was Abraham's faith, 'Your father rejoiced that he should see my day: and he has seen it, and is glad.' I do not affirm that the fact of their redemption being definite to the fathers of the patriarchal and legal Church, its manner indefinite, that this indefiniteness was not gradually so taken away by the Almighty before the advent of His Son that the scheme itself of salvation was revealed to the Church, and the circumstances of our Saviour's personal Incarnation and life 'in the flesh' shadowed forth in strong outlines. Admitting this, still its recognition or understanding was no necessary part of the saving faith of the patriarchs: they might remain willingly in the dark as to God's means, provided they were in the light as to God's

promise and intention; the οτι was theirs, the πως was God's. Christianity, therefore, labors under no necessity to demonstrate that the patriarchs and prophets *understood* the particulars of the mode of their redemption by a future Saviour; it is sufficient to prove them 'partakers of the same faith with ourselves,' if it is plainly shown that belief in such a redemption, involving in it a necessary pre-understanding of the immortality of the soul, constituted their creed of action and the ground of their acceptance with God. The second admission is this,—that so far as the *mode* of atonement was concerned, the very people themselves to whom the Scriptures were delivered, remained, with the Scriptures in their hands, ignorant as the Gentiles themselves, until the atonement itself was effected. To the Jews the Scriptures never did, and at this moment do not, explain themselves among them; the Scriptures were daily read and sabbatically expounded, but in the very point for which all Scripture was inspired—the Incarnation of the Son of God—they were to the Jew a blank, as much a vacancy as nature is to sightless eyes. The question between the Jew and the Christian is yet, in a mental sense, 'Which understands the Scripture aright?' If the Scripture is self-explanatory, how come the Jews to persist now as ever in an interpretation spiritually and *de facto* of the Messianic kingdom repugnant to the interpretation received among Christians? The apostles, speaking of the time before the descent of the Holy Ghost, frequently admit that they understood not the Scriptures: neither before his conversion could

St. Paul have understood them, for he persecuted Him through whom they were given on conscientious principles. What then? The Scriptures were not understood before the Incarnation of our Saviour; His teaching constituted the revelation of the Scriptures; the fulfilment of God's promise became definitively its explanation. The children of Abraham's faith receive, the children of Abraham's loins reject, the Scriptures: for it is all one whether a man reject the Scriptures in themselves or in their true acceptation. Can any reverence for the Scriptures exceed that of the Jews for them? Can any ignorance of what those Scriptures really mean exceed theirs? The deduction is this,—that the Scriptures being one in their own truth and intelligibility, are not one, nor were ever intended to be one, as far as regards being completely understood, or forming a subjective integrity of intellect in the minds of those receiving them; they open as the seasons of God require them to open to men's minds; they are coordinates with His purposes. Christianity is in the Old Testament: the Jews under the Old Testament neither saw nor acknowledged it, though the 'Israel of God' among them were even then Christians indeed in faith and works; they looked to and acted upon the promises; but neither did these, though prophets and kings in the ancient Church, see in the Scriptures what we see. It was not the purpose of God they should; doubtless they see them now: in paradise they understand them and rejoice, but then they were to remain under Moses the servant, and not immediately under Christ the Son. Adam un-

derstood no more of his restoration to come than what God then and there revealed; as the times of God proceeded so the revelations of God opened to, and were delivered to the times, constantly withal with greater clearness defining the future redemption, until the fulness of the times and the Scriptures were united in the Incarnation. Whatever, therefore, the amount of knowledge possessed by the patriarchs and prophets 'of the things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven' might have been, their faith, so far as God required it, was right and saving faith; wherefore, as the Church of England declares, they are not to be heard which feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises. Our knowledge of Scripture is to be fulfilled in God's own times; we err as much by affectation of knowledge as by feebleness of faith: what in real knowledge of spiritual truths the Church militant is now to the Church in the desert, the Church triumphant will be to the Church militant. Compared to the former we are in light; compared to the Church in heaven we are still in the 'shadows of things to come:' we see only in part, we know only in part. If the Jews had attempted to penetrate or to explain the means by which the Almighty miraculously governed them and their fathers, could they by any possibility have succeeded? Do they now, rejecting Christ, succeed with any other than their own race in assigning meaning or purpose to the ordinances of their divinely-given religion? Did Abraham understand the real meaning of circumcision? or his children of those hosts of significant types, each of which

to us is as plainly indicative of the God-man as the sun's reflection in water is of the very sun in heaven? or to sum up all, how, before the prophecies were accomplished by omnipotent acts, could any human mind, Jew or Gentile, explain such words as 'a virgin shall conceive and bear a child;' or, 'for us a child is born;' and this child 'The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father;' or, 'Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts;' or continuous passages of Isaiah, in which, to human knowledge and human ideas of the possible and impossible, the contradictions seemed as flat and palpable as words designedly could represent them? Even as to the temporal effects of the advent of Christ, the Holy Spirit declared such things as at the time of their delivery seemed totally irreconcilable with each other and themselves, for example:—'Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship. I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face towards the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet!' To the Church of that time these prophecies were both above and against what appeared the surest reason, for how could a virgin conceive? How could a child now first born into the

world be The Mighty God, the everlasting Father? How could there be any fellow or equal to God? and yet more, how could 'the equal with God' suffer death? or how could He whom man despiseth, and the nation abhorreth, be at the same time One whom the kings and princes of the world should worship, and to whom the Gentiles should bring their sons and their daughters? These things were confessedly contradictions and impossibilities to the reason of man. Did God require the Church to understand, or only to believe them? Only to believe. We now see that such belief was the highest reason: these contradictions and impossibilities have, in the Incarnation of God in Christ, received the simplest possible solution. The mystery of the fact remains, but the solution by this one fact of what before were mysteries both irreconcilable with each other and with human reason, teaches us the folly of bringing any one of God's revealed truths to the test of possibility by our present state of knowledge or criterion of powers. 'Has God revealed it thus?' is the terminus of our present right of inquiry. If the answer be 'Yes,' our firm faith in such revelation will certainly in the end prove the only true wisdom. The whole Bible, indeed, in one sense, consists of revelations as much above reason as reason can conceive: as much against apparent reason as the immobility of the sun is apparently against the evidence of the senses. The Catholic Church, like the Jewish Church, but in a more heavenly and spiritual degree, is subjected by the Almighty to the same trial by faith; but instead of the thousand mysteries significant of,

and only explicable by, the Incarnation of God in Christ 'which should come,' her mysteries are founded upon the fact of the Incarnation accomplished, and are only so far mysteries as that Incarnation itself is; yet they are mysteries of the highest faith. Who, more than the Jew of old understood the then declaration of God to His Church, can now understand the equally plain declarations of God to the Church after the Incarnation? God is incarnate in our bodies, in our spirits, in His Church. How can it be? God reveals that it is so: the Scriptures have indeed been written for us in vain if we believe them not. God the Father, the Son, the Spirit, comes to us in baptism, abides on us in the Eucharist, unites Himself with our soul, and yet the Holy Spirit intercedes from within our soul, the Saviour presents, and the Father receives that intercession in heaven. How can these things be? 'Believe them and thou shalt be saved.' I see bread and wine on the table of the Lord: they are consecrated; they become verily and indeed to the faithful—as our own sinful bodies do after the consecration in baptism—the body and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord. How can that be, seeing they appear still bread and wine? I know not more than I know how God was made flesh, how the dust was made man, or how man shall hereafter be 'the partaker of the divine nature.' God has so declared, I so believe, and I doubt not my belief is the highest reason. There is a judgment to come, in which God will judge the world by the man Jesus Christ whom He hath appointed. How can that be

when he was despised, crucified, and rejected of men? I know not more than I know how, or by what mysterious power, He has become 'the light of the Gentiles, and the ends of the earth bow down to Him.' There is a resurrection of the body and a life everlasting. How can these things be, seeing the body becomes dust, and organic life dies with it? I know not more than how the first man became life, or how that life has been propagated for five thousand years, or how the Spirit of God creates out of nothing, or recreates a soul from its fall. How these things are is very plain to God. That they are as He has declared them to be, I should be either infatuated by sin, or blinded by Satan, not to believe. As He was in the Church of old, till He was revealed in Christ, past finding out, so in the Catholic mysteries of Christianity does He, in a more heavenly way, hide Himself until 'the restitution of all things, when we shall know even as we are known.' Meanwhile, like the Father of the faithful, we live by faith, not by vision, having this certainty within ourselves that every article of our faith will, in God's good time, be found an everlasting verity. Between the patriarchs and ourselves the degrees of faith are various, but the faith itself is one, as the recompense of the reward is one. 'Many shall come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.'"[1]

INF. In fact, it would make little difference whether

[1] Verities of the Church. 8vo. Rivingtons.

the immortality of the soul pervaded the old dispensation or not; it is one of the fundamental tenets of Christianity, and to be a Christian, a man must accept it with all its consequences. Let us view the doctrine from another position. You attribute such a soul, without exception or discrimination, to every human being.

CHR. Certainly.

INF. No matter where, when, or how; from parents of the most eminent or the most infamous character, under what sanctities or what orgies the human being is conceived and born, such a soul is its "Ego" within—it can neither die, nor be less than this "Ego" forever.

CHR. And what then?

INF. By this creed death is a misnomer—to man it does not exist. No man ever has died; none ever will die; none can die. Death, so called, is a transition, not a destruction. Man no more dies than the sun ceases to be, because at one hour it flames in the East, at another in the meridian South; because it now glares red and portentous in the atmosphere of the pestilence, now beams with lustrous purity in the heavens of serenity and health. The medium and locality are changed, but it is still the sun.

CHR. Continue.

INF. I say the doctrine which such a metaphor illustrates cannot be true: human nature itself refutes it. Who can believe such nameless wretches as he sees, for instance, in the alleys of manufacturing towns, withered, haggard, black with grime and

dirt, woofs, living woofs of filth and drunkenness, to be immortal souls?

Chr. By your own comparison one might believe it. Their bodies would be the atmosphere of the pestilence round a benighted orb of light, the soul. Let us go to an extreme instance: let us take an hereditary savage of the lowest grade, and put him by the side of Alexander, of Homer, of Fenelon, of Pearson, of Shakspeare: his soul is as immortal as theirs: neither can die. It is undeveloped, it scarcely glitters: nevertheless the minutest and most formless particle of diamond dust is not less diamond than the Koh-i-noor. The Zoolu savage is not less an immortality than Milton; only in him the deathless principle is deeply earthed where the light of God has not yet flashed upon it: but let that light flash, the soul of the savage will respond to its action with as true, if not as brilliant scintillations, as the soul of a Milton. Again, I will put this savage by the side of the Belvidere Apollo. What object can to the senses present a contrast more in favor of the statue against the human being? From the former we recoil, from the latter we drink in an intoxicating stream of artistic inspiration; from the former we avert our glance with pity and disgust, on the latter we could gaze with conscious rapture till the fountains of light and the faculties of admiration were alike exhausted. Nevertheless there is that within the savage which is not within the Apollo; there is that within the savage capable of making him the sculptor of a thousand Apollos, and of treading them when made, as nothing better than

the work of his own hands, beneath his feet. He possesses, however dormant or torpified, a soul—therefore soul-sensitiveness to impressions and passions produced by higher agencies than matter. Now in attempting the elevation of this savage to Christianity, we proceed on this Article of our Faith that he, equally with any pope, bishop, or king, possesses a soul, possesses soul-sensitiveness to the things of God and the Spirit. On testing our faith, we find it true: he does possess a soul, he shows himself sensitive to God. Did he not, we might as well essay the conversion of the marble Apollo or a Brahmin bull.

Inf. But such sensitiveness is so feeble, that its pulsations can scarcely be detected.

Chr. Be it so. It may be quite a dead soul, with no pulsations at all; as dead in its tenement of flesh, as the body is in the leaden cerements of the grave. It is still a soul, though dead: the Word of God passes and speaks to it: it receives life: it breathes: it rises from the tomb of corruption and sin: it stands erect in a new world of light and glorious creations: its eyes are opened to God and to heaven: the new life of the Word bounds in its veins, and the assurance of eternity glows in the brow of the second Adam from the dust—the savage has become a Christian.

Inf. But this is a miracle.

Chr. True. The perpetual miracle of the Church: without such she never yet converted a soul to Christ—every Christian sustained, or heathen evangelized, is a standing miracle. Within that soul, so dead,

there must descend a Presence from God, as real as the light of the sun within the walls of a room, the image of a father in the pupil of the eye of the child before the child can see its father,—as real as the arm of Christ raising the damsel of Jairus from her bed. This Presence can only be God Himself: for it is everywhere wherever the soul of man turns to God: it is ubiquitous: it is the promised Presence of Christ with His Church, and every soul converted is a demonstration that such Presence is a living Power and an endless fact. Without it the Church would long ago have perished from the face of the earth.

Inf. You thus cite every convert as both evidence of the existence of a soul in man responsive to God, and of the perpetual Presence of Christ with the Church in bringing such soul to God. Behold again another result of apostolical sagacity—their system sweeps the New Zealander and the Caffre, as well as the Platonist and the Stoic, within its net. No human being escapes its meshes: every human being converted it builds as a fresh living stone into its bulwarks and defences; autocrat and serf it challenges as equally its mission, and, like the enchantresses of Tasso and Spenser, it gathers the most antagonistic natures, the lion and the lamb, the bear and the ox, the babe and the cockatrice to play at its feet. I thus candidly admit the catholicity of the apostolic genius: it fathomed the naked barbarian in the wild as successfully as the jewelled empress on her throne: it hit upon that feeling in human nature which, in the desert or court, equally re-

sponded to the universal hand which touched its chord—the hope of eternity, the satisfaction of an immortal pride.

Let us proceed to another topic intimately connected with this last article of my Infidelity. I mean Inspiration. You hold, it appears to me, Christianity in man to be a perpetual inspiration?

Chr. Christ in a Christian is a perpetual inspiration. Christ is both body and spirit: to be a Christian we must not only be of His body the Church, but His Spirit also must in that body work in us as life works in the members of a man: sending blood to its veins, vitality to its flesh, sensibility to its nerves, motion and action to its very bone and sinew.

Inf. And this Spirit of Christ you term "the Holy Ghost," its operation you term inspiration. It inspired the prophets of old in knowledge: it inspires you in grace: it sanctifies all the elect of God: it is diametrically opposed to the Evil Spirit: it is the Lord and Giver of life: one with God, one with Christ. Now I cannot believe in the existence of either this Holy Spirit, or of its contrary Evil Spirit —nor, of course, in any operation of either on the human mind or soul.

Chr. Let us examine if such disbelief is consistent with facts and reason or not. You find, I presume, in your own mind, contrary and repugnant inclinations. Of two contraries, both cannot be right. For instance, you swear: one principle of your mind causes such swearing to be a relief to anger, ill-temper, acerbity; another principle causes you to feel certain compunctions at prostituting—if there be such a

thing as holiness—the most holy of names to a momentary ebullition of human frailty or fury.

Inf. Proceed.

Chr. Or again. You have fifty pounds to spare. One principle induces you to expend it in considerate charity: in saving some distressed family from destitution, aiding some struggling young man to secure an independency in the world, or educating a few poor and destitute children. The other principle bids you lavish it entirely on yourself. "Indulge genio," eat, drink, enjoy yourself; gratify your personal vanity, your own ease, your own passions. What are others to you? Consult only your own pleasures. These are contrary inclinations.

Inf. Confessedly.

Chr. Which is the good, which is the evil inclination?

Inf. Neither of them absolutely; it depends on circumstances, sometimes one, sometimes the other. Charity is good, self-indulgence is good: carried to extremes both may be evil—both self-ruinous.

Chr. Not so. Good can never become evil, nor evil good. The goodness of God is ceaseless, excessive, and in this world indiscriminate—is it therefore evil?

Inf. That cannot be.

Chr. True charity, then,—the charity impelled by love and guided by judgment,—can never be at one time good, at another time evil. False charity—of which I am not speaking—can never be good. We are speaking of true charity as the contrary to selfish indulgence. You confess to its emotions; you con-

fess, where the option existed of relieving with this fifty pounds an orphan family, or of spending it on a midnight orgy, you would feel the former to be good, the latter to be evil. Whence derived you that feeling? How did it originate?

Inf. Who can say? It is part of my nature, of my instincts.

Chr. Emotion, then, towards good, consciousness of satisfying some right principles within us when we are doing good in preference to doing evil is, you say, part of our nature.

Inf. Certainly; of every rightly-constituted nature.

Chr. We agree;—of every rightly-constituted nature. How human nature is or can be thus rightly constituted we do not now discuss; on that point we should probably differ. Thus far we concur, that an inclination to goodness and good acts is part of every man's nature, as it ought to be. How came it to be part?

Inf. How!

Chr. You do not assert man to be self-created?

Inf. I do not go so far as that.

Chr. Something else, then, must have created it in him. This something we term God. God, then, created emotion towards good, and the sensation of pleasure in doing good as part of our right nature. This feeling is God's creation within us.

Inf. I comprehend.

Chr. When we do good, and feel delight in doing it, our nature is then right; it is as God created it. The creation of such a feeling, such a right nature is

not ours; for as you admit, man made not himself: it is altogether God's. You confess also to the existence of this feeling in every individual without exception whose nature is as it ought to be. It all, and in all cases, originates with God.

We have thus, then, the fact that cannot be controverted, of a divine action of God in the soul of man, throughout his race, from the creation to the present time. By what one term shall we designate such divine action? Is it not necessarily Inspiration?

Inf. Call it such if it sufficiently express the thing itself.

Chr. You thus acknowledge an inspiration of God in every man's soul since the creation—in your own soul. You have felt it urging you to good. You grant that, as man created not himself, it must be in common with the rest of your right nature, a creation of God's.

Inf. I anticipate your inference.

Chr. Now, if any emotions be rightly called holy, emotions towards goodness must surely be such. The Supreme Being who created such emotions must, for the same reason, be a holy Being,—be, in the strictest sense, the Author and Finisher of all goodness and all holiness. You thus admit the inspiration in the soul of man to be that of the Supreme Being as essentially a holy God. Now God is a Spirit; that which so inspires us is God the Holy Spirit, as we state in the Creed, "the Holy Ghost, one God with the Father and the Son." You confess such inspiration in every man impressed with the desire of, or

feeling pleasure in doing good; yet, directly you put on the character, not of a man, but of an Infidel, you exclaim, "I do not believe in such inspiration, nor yet in God as the Good and Holy Spirit." What more does Christianity here do than enunciate a divine fact between God and man as old as creation, and as broad as the heart of the human race?

Inf. But this, I opine, is not the sense in which Christians commonly understand the terms "Inspiration, the Holy Ghost." They mean, I think, to express by them something quite distinct from the God of creation and nature; something not in accordance with, but separate from, the original Cause of our existence, acting in some incomprehensible way, and producing an equally incomprehensible effect in the mind called "Grace."

Chr. I see you have looked at a great Christian doctrine through an heretical medium which distorts God into parts, and represents the Holy Spirit as a subordinate and partially independent Deity. You then suppose such distortion the orthodox faith, and argue against it as such. No proceeding is more common.

Inf. But the orthodox doctrine of Grace itself infers a supernatural interference with our natural passions and propensities. The system is built on Grace *versus* Nature: whatever opposes this operation of the Holy Ghost, proceeding, as it does, from, and being one with God, it condemns as sin. Now certain passions are inherent in our nature; they were therefore clearly intended by the Creator of that nature to be brought out into action.

CHR. I will grant you more. Not a single passion or affection exists in man's nature which was not only intended to be used, but the not using or developing of which is not a criminal negligence.

INF. That is a very liberal idea; but Christianity condemns these natural passions as sinful.

CHR. Where?

INF. Everywhere throughout its revelation.

CHR. Specify. We do not in this discussion admit general assertions on either side. We deal with the special facts of Christianity and Infidelity.

INF. Do you not admit my statement to be true?

CHR. Not as you intend and put it. Your statement is, "Christianity condemns the natural passions of man as in themselves sinful," which I entirely deny. Modify the statement thus,—"Christianity condemns the abuse of every natural passion in man as sinful," and I concur. There is a right and a wrong use in every thing. In us, with reference to God, the wrong use constitutes what we call sin. Of this fundamental distinction between good and evil few have ever made any question; the great difficulty in the science of ethics in its application to particular instances, is to know what is the right, what is the wrong use of external and internal powers. All things to us are as their uses are, good or evil. Here is a drop of prussic acid; the evil or the good of it is not in itself, but in its use; it may be used by a poisoner or by a physician. The former being away from its right use, we call abuse. So with our own powers. The tongue may pray or swear; the hand may work or murder; the mind be

a temple of God, or a smithy of the devil; every member an agent of sin, or an instrument of righteousness. Similarly also with our acquisitions. Knowledge is power, but it may be divine power or satanic power, health or poison. Riches may be a blessing or a curse to ourselves and society. Station and rank the greatest levers to immorality, or the strongest bulwarks of religion and modesty. Thus with every addition we make to ourselves, our means, our powers, we incur an additional responsibility for good or evil. The perversion of any of these means—in themselves quite neutral things—to evil, constitutes, with reference to God, sin; with reference to society, crime. Which of these two,—the right use or the abuse, the evil or good of a thing,—we choose, depends on a man's own volition or will. Jesus Christ proffers to give us two things which by nature we have not—the will to choose right, and the power to act upon that choice. But Christianity no more pronounces any passion or faculty of man to be itself sinful, than it does gold, iron, marble, minerals, herbs, or any power in nature to be in itself sinful. But as science teaches the real use of the latter, so does Christianity teach and regulate the use of the former. What sheer ignorance or barbarism is to the latter, Infidelity, in my judgment, is to the former.

Inf. But what you term "abuse," I probably think and term "use."

Chr. Very likely. But as to the passions themselves, they are God's creations in man; and as science reveals to us the right use of God's creations in nature, so Christianity reveals to us the right use

of His creations, these passions included, within ourselves. They are themselves good, and designed for good. So far, it appears, we agree.

INF. All Christians do not; for some call and believe the utter mortification of all their natural passions, Sanctity.

CHR. One topic at a time. Leaving this and that Christian alone, where does Christianity itself condemn the passions as in themselves sinful?

INF. Revenge is a natural passion—it condemns revenge as sinful.

CHR. Immediately you allege a specific instance, we can deal with it. In one sense revenge is natural to man, for it yields pleasure to that nature as it now is.

INF. Precisely. The Latins called pleasure "voluptas," because it consists in doing just what we will; we, too, for the same reason, call it pleasure, because it consists in doing what we please—and revenge certainly gratifies our nature.

CHR. But that nature is a fallen one.

INF. Nonsense. This is the way you Christians argue. You lay down certain postulates, and then proceed to reason upon them as if we too, who are not Christians, accepted such postulates for facts.

CHR. Not so. We do accept as facts certain postulates: our acceptance of them constitutes us Christians; your non-acceptance of them constitutes you Infidels. With our fellow-Christians we reason upon these postulates as upon a common foundation—but not with Infidels.

INF. Do you not state man's present nature to be

a fallen one; and is not that one of the postulates of your system?

CHR. I do. And the taking such a fact for granted is also one of our postulates; but I do not here advance it as such, but merely as a statement of mine against a statement of yours. I say, "Our nature is now fallen: revenge is the passion of a fallen nature." You say, "Our nature is not fallen: revenge, being one of its passions, may be legitimately indulged." Is that fairly stated?

INF. Fairly.

CHR. Were you a Christian, this precept of Scripture would settle the question, "Revenge not yourselves: Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, saith the Lord." Not being a Christian, you hold its opposite. Thus, "Revenge yourselves: vengeance is every man's own right: he himself ought to repay his enemy." The difference then is, Christianity asserts revenge to be the depravation of a certain passion in man—which depravation is the result of a fall in man's whole nature, the passions included. Infidelity asserts revenge to be the pure original passion itself, and therefore rightly indulged. If Christianity admitted your premise, it would also your inference. It holds a contrary premise, and by consequence a contrary inference. Now Christianity expressly states every passion of man, as his nature came originally from God, to be good. "God saw all that He had made, and, behold, it was very good."[1]

INF. I observe your point.

[1] Gen. i. 31.

CHR. Christianity lays down this premise, "Revenge is the depravation of a certain good or useful passion:" Infidelity this, "Revenge is no depravation, but the good, unfallen passion itself." The question then is, Which of these premises is true, Christianity or yours?

INF. Who or what is to decide?

CHR. We shall clear the ground for decision very easily. Christianity differs from you as to what constitutes the use or abuse of our natural instincts. Let us see in this instance of revenge, whether facts bear you or Christianity out as right. One man insults another: the insulted party waits his opportunity, broods over his wrong, meets his enemy, and murders him. This is revenge. The forms of it—vendettas, assassinations, massacres, clan and family feuds, hereditary enmities, individual duels—are infinite. The man of honor shoots his man: the Caffre or the Red Indian spears every man, woman, and child in his enemy's household or village. This is nature. I admit it, and doubtless the Red Indian finds the successful indulgence of such revenge one of the highest pleasures of that nature. But I assert it to be a fallen nature: such a nature in full action makes a fallen world. Civilized society could not keep together for one twelvemonth, were only this one passion of revenge permitted uncontrolled license of action.

INF. But I do not mean the revenge of Corsicans, of ancient feudatories, of Caffres, or Red Indians.

CHR. Why not? Their nature is as much nature as yours—to judge by their passions, much stronger nature. Their right to give full indulgence to its

instincts according to their ideas, is as indisputable as yours to give full indulgence to your instincts according to your ideas.

INF. You must not put the civilized infidel on a par with such characters as these—they are savages.

CHR. They are pure, simple, unsophisticated human nature, not in the least tainted with "the superstition" of Christianity, but holding, like yourself, revenge to be a noble, sublime, and genuine virtue. From such revenge, in its coarse nudity, why do you recoil? Why do you shudder at Cain imbrued in a brother's blood?

INF. Ah! such revenge is entirely unnatural.

CHR. That is now man's nature which man's nature now does. In this light, idolatry, perjury, subornation, lying, deceitfulness, dishonoring of parents, theft, piracy, detraction, fraud, violence, rapacity, sensuality, are *de facto* human nature. The whole history of man is the history of such a nature as this. Here we do not need faith: the proofs are within the province of the mind and the senses. The evidence that such is human nature is supplied us by the civil and criminal codes of every nation on the earth. The nation having no such code is known, by the fact of such deficiency itself, to be nothing else than a tribe of savages or barbarians.

INF. As you name these passions they are undoubtedly evil, but I will not admit you name them correctly.

CHR. Does not the law of England define a thousand actions under one or other of these categories? The law of every land does so, is compelled by the

stern facts of human nature to do so. The legal definition of each crime may not in all ages and nations be the same, but human nature is a nature of robbery or murder according to your as well as my definition of these two crimes. Ask any sane person if the act of Courvoisier upon the life of Lord William Russel did not involve "murder." He, like the jury, would reply in the affirmative. Ask another person upon the same evidence the same question. Suppose, admitting the fact, he yet denied it to be murder, what opinion would you form of his nature and character? Would you trust him with the safety of a finger of your body?

INF. Of a verity, no.

CHR. You would reason, "If this man holds that cutting his master's throat at midnight be not murder, he will most probably, on the first opportunity which presents itself of theft or plunder, cut my throat at night." And the world would regard such reasoning as very solid.

INF. And I too.

CHR. A man's real opinions or faith underlie all his actions. To deny then that there can be such a crime as murder, would *per se* evince extreme depravity in the denier.

INF. It would.

CHR. Human nature denying it, would convict itself of such depravity. We have therefore on either ground, first, whether human nature commits a murder; or, secondly, committing a treacherous, malevolent, and sanguinary deed, denies it to be murder, proof visible and tangible of evil existing in

that nature. We might apply the same course of reasoning to every other vice and crime, and their respective definitions. Now how came such evil there first?

INF. It is in the nature.

CHR. How came it in the nature? Are you not now in a dilemma? If it was not so at first, and yet is so now, you admit a fall, and so far become a Christian. If it was so at first, what becomes of your proposition that every such instinct of man's nature, being as you hold original, is good? Either this evil is now in man's nature individually, or it is in him as the nature of the oak is in the acorn, generically.

INF. Not the latter: all men are not murderers.

CHR. Certainly not; nor in a murder is the catalogue of crimes exhausted: the former, then?

INF. Well.

CHR. The nature of a murderer then is, even on this admission, so far an evil nature. That evil you say is born with him, is in him individually. If we write down the enumeration of all the vices, deficiencies, crimes, and evil dispositions, is there any person living not subject to one or the other of them? I ask not a rigid definition of them: throw the weights into the balance of laxity and mercy: exempt each individual from as many as you possibly can; will you pronounce, after all allowances, one spotless from all in heart and life?

INF. Impossible, every one has his flaws and faults.

CHR. See, then, how constantly you admit in your own language truths which you refuse to believe in

the language of Christianity. Here you admit the whole doctrine of original sin. In many other points, I am convinced, if we reasoned inductively from facts *à posteriori*, you would concede as perfectly true, the doctrines which Christianity lays down, *à priori*, as matters of faith. Well then, every one has his faults, —confessedly faults. Every one of all mankind makes up human nature; human nature is then more or less infected with evil. Not each individual in the same way, the same degree, but all in some degree and some way positively evil. Whether we argue then from the individual to the genus, or from the genus to the individual, the result is the same; the existence of both individual and generic evil in human nature. The question then recurs, "How came it there originally?" The fact is as undeniable as it is painful: which is right reason, by ignoring it to bring down on ourselves and society all the disastrous consequences of voluntary blindness, or by confronting it, do the best we can to lessen and eradicate it?

Inf. I cannot gainsay that much evil exists in human nature; the origin of the evil there or elsewhere who knows?

Chr. We concur as to the fact; as to the origin of the fact you have no knowledge.

Inf. Nor Christians either.

Chr. We do not pretend to it. We deal with the fact itself: its origin falls within the province of faith, not knowledge. Our faith is, "that it was not so at the beginning." Human nature is not now what God created it; there is evil in it now; God

cannot in any creature be the author of evil; it is therefore a fallen nature, lapsed for the worse from God and its original creation. This postulate of faith we do not prove, but accept as the under-fact of the truth we both admit. On such truth reciprocally admitted we do reason with you; on the under-fact we do not. We affirm it as an article of the Christian faith: we believe it on the Word of God: on that Word we do not reason; we accept it as coming directly from the Creator of all reason: by such acceptance we pronounce it more purely and authoritatively truth than any deduction of our own reason could possibly be: for to us the Word of God is, as we said, the reason of God. And what is the reason of a creature—especially of a fallen creature—compared to that of its Creator?

Inf. In recognizing the existence of evil we concur; in accounting for it we differ.

Chr. More accurately, I think, Infidelity cannot account for a fact which it feels itself compelled to admit: upon which all human as well as divine laws and restrictions proceed: which once ignored, society perishes. Our faith gives us the origin of it from a source more reliable than all the inferences of human knowledge; in mere knowledge, therefore, we are on a par: where knowledge fails, you stop; we walk further with a safer guide than knowledge. Faith indeed is a much firmer principle than knowledge: for the end of knowledge of every kind is faith. But observe how much of Christianity you have hereby conceded, the depravity of man's nature and all its logical inferences; the fallen passions of man Chris-

tianity condemns; so does every sound code of human law: such condemnation is not superstition, but a thing inseparable from both legislation and religion. These passions are depravations; to style them "natural" is as a fact correct: because they are so human nature stands itself condemned as evil; to affirm because they are natural they are not sinful or injurious, is to advance a proposition which will not bear a moment's investigation.

Inf. Well, then, leaving the general question, I will moot a special moral objection included in it upon this very Word of Revelation itself. It is not in every instance consistent with itself. Here at any rate I can specify.

Chr. Do so.

Inf. At one period it tolerates, at another it prohibits polygamy. That is adultery in a Christian which was none in a Jew. Those who in the Old Testament — Abraham, Jacob, David — are called saints, would now in England, where the New Testament forms the basis of the law, be tried, convicted, and transported for an offence which, under the old dispensation, was none whatever. Is not this inconsistency of a gross kind, being on one of the gravest points of social and domestic morality?

Chr. Christianity, you say, condemns Polygamy.

Inf. Yes; I also say Judaism permitted Polygamy. Christianity and Judaism are in your view the former and the latter phases of one and the same religion; these two phases by contradicting one another on an important moral point prove one, at least, not to be divine. According to Judaism David was

not the less a saint for keeping a royal seraglio; according to Christianity he was an adulterer.

CHR. Where does Christianity term David an adulterer for keeping a royal seraglio?

INF. He would, I mean, be now branded as such, if he lived under the dispensation of Christianity.

CHR. That is quite a different thing.

INF. No; not so far as morality is in question. What is wrong now, was wrong then; what was not wrong then, cannot be wrong now. Time—to transfer one of your maxims—is no element in the moral right and wrong of things. Theft, lying, murder, were as wrong in the antediluvians as they are in us. So also was polygamy in its own nature as wrong in the patriarchs and prophets as it would now be in any of us. Yet Judaism did not condemn it; Christianity does condemn it. Select which of these phases of religion you please as Divine, the other ceases to be Divine, and in such cessation destroys also the Divinity of the other.

CHR. How would Christianity, by such cessation, destroy the Divine authority of Judaism?

INF. Because Christianity is the only thing which puts any sense or meaning into Judaism. Without Christianity as its development Judaism for the last eighteen hundred years is dead and formless dust. Suppose Christianity false, nothing of Judaism is fulfilled. The times specified by Judaism for the fulfilment of its futurities is irretrievably past. Judaism itself would thus be a proven falsehood.

CHR. By this argument the truth of Judaism depends on the truth of Christianity?

INF. Certainly; do you deny it?

CHR. No; I fully admit it. I am only surprised at *your* advancing it.

INF. Because it fixes you on the question of polygamy in a complete dilemma. Choose which you will, your choice in its fair inference destroys the Divine authority of both religions. My argument here is, I think, unanswerable.

CHR. Do you wish it to be so? Do you wish both Judaism and Christianity to turn out detected impositions?

INF. I wish all things which are true. If they are not true, let both, come what may, be detected and rejected.

CHR. The whole of Christianity?

INF. No, not the whole, for parts of it are perfect in their beauty. Every one believes something of Christianity.

CHR. Would you then reject that part of it which prohibits bigamy and polygamy?

INF. Decidedly not. No philosopher, I conceive, will defend or justify polygamy. I, on this point, utterly condemn Judaism, and deny its Divine origin or power of dispensation. I hold in this entirely with Christianity against Judaism.

CHR. Yet you would destroy Christianity upon a suppositive difference with Judaism, in which you yourself wholly coincide with Christianity. Strange actions Infidelity commits you to against yourself and your most philosophic convictions! The whole religion of civilization, with its vast amount of admitted good, is to be abolished by a philosopher,

because, condemning a practice which he also condemns, he thinks such condemnation condemnatory also, by a reflective process from Judaism, of its own Divinity! What a curious confusion of motives!

INF. Be it so; what has it to do with the argument?

CHR. Very much, in the judgment of practical men. As an anti-polygamist you are a Christian, a practical man would therefore call upon you to support Christianity. "No," you reply, "that is the very reason, the unanswerable reason why I must abolish Christianity." Now practical men have a right to expect that if you go about to abolish Christianity, you must take up your ground of assault where you entirely disagree, not entirely agree with its precepts. If as a Mormonite maintaining the rightfulness of polygamy you advocated the abolition of Christianity, which forbids it as a sin, there would be, and there would appear some consistency in your argument. But an anti-polygamist working to overthrow Christianity, because it also condemns polygamy, would, to non-philosophers, be an unintelligible contradiction. They would instantly demand, "Why from that very point in which you profess yourself a Christian do you impugn Christianity?"

INF. Suppose, then, such argument not to be exactly appropriate from my lips as an anti-polygamist; suppose it to proceed as you say from a Mormonite. How do you refute it?

CHR. I am arguing with an Infidel, not a Mormonite. I am an Anglican Churchman, you are an Infidel. Let us keep to what we really are, and not

assume other people's parts and characters. A Mormonite takes different ground from you. He asserts polygamy to be either unabolished by Christianity, or to be a privilege granted by the Lord to His peculiar saints in these latter days, themselves. Whatever Mormonism be, depravity, ignorance, or knavery, it is not Infidelity.

Inf. It strikes me, however, that the argument would, in another person's mouth—a Turk's, for instance—be irrefutable. Are you judicious in avoiding it?

Chr. It is not my intention to do so. I thus far only desired to show in what a contradictory character Infidelity stands forth to the world as a reformer or a subverter of Christianity. It could not answer the first simple question put to it by any head of a family. Let us now grapple with the objection itself. Christianity and Judaism, you aver, in the matter of polygamy contradict each other; both, therefore, cannot be of Divine authority. No matter which is false; if one is, both are. This is, I think, the pith of your argument.

Inf. It is.

Chr. First, then, I concede that if Judaism be a false religion, Christianity is so also—and if Christianity be false, Judaism is so also.

Inf. You concede also that Christianity prohibits polygamy.

Chr. It does.

Inf. And that Judaism did not condemn it?

Chr. It did not.

Inf. Which was wrong?

CHR. Neither.

INF. Prove how, of two contradictories, one is not wrong.

CHR. Where is the contradiction between polygamy and monogamy? In what does it consist?

INF. Why, in every point.

CHR. Specify.

INF. In the very fact of two wives, which is in itself a contradiction.

CHR. According to your Deity, Nature?

INF. I think so.

CHR. Nature then can, it seems, when it suits philosophy, be in perfect accord with Christianity. But here I believe you wrest nature somewhat to your own preconceptions, or rather to your unconscious reception of the teachings of Christianity. What does "polygamy" in itself mean?

INF. It means marriage with many wives at one time.

CHR. And bigamy?

INF. With two wives.

CHR. And monogamy?

INF. With one wife at one time.

CHR. In each and every case, then, it is marriage. What constitutes marriage?

INF. A sacred vow of fidelity mutually plighted to each other by the respective parties.

CHR. What makes it "sacred?"

INF. Its attestation by some holy rite before God.

CHR. Is no other union than that which God Himself witnesses and consecrates, matrimony or marriage?

Inf. I should say not—it may be an union of some kind, but not marriage.

Chr. What say you then to our poor-house and registrar "unions,"—to mere civil unions,—are they marriages at all?

Inf. They are civil contracts, civilly binding—nothing more—they were not, I infer, intended to be more than civilly binding on either party.

Chr. Who made these civil contracts binding?

Inf. The State.

Chr. Had it right and power to do so?

Inf. Power it had, or it could not have done it. A civil right of making them civilly binding it also had.

Chr. Had the State the same right of making a contract between one man and two, or three, or ten women, as binding as it has already made this contract between one man and one woman?

Inf. The State?

Chr. Yes—the State, simply as the State, Pagan, Infidel, or Mohammedan.

Inf. Yes—any State, simply as the State, has the right of making a union between one man and one hundred women as civilly binding as between one man and one woman. Most States—the Christian excepted—do so.

Chr. Was polygamy a civil bond among the Jews?

Inf. If I answer "yes," you will demand, "What had it then to do with their religion any more than our civil union-house contracts have to do with the Church of Christ among us?"

Chr. Perhaps I should.

INF. I will confine myself to the statement that whether it was only civil, or something more than civil, it was not condemned as sinful in itself by their religion.

CHR. I have admitted as much. So far, then, as the civil power is in question, the Jewish civil polity had the same right as any other in ancient or modern nations, to legalize polygamy. Now enters the religion of the argument. Polygamy, as we saw, infers marriage, and therefore sacred vows in contradistinction to mere civil engagements. When the man pledges the same sacred vows to ten instead of one, is that act an extension of or a contradiction to marriage?

INF. Your proposition is, that the extension of sacred vows was as valid between one man and any number of women among the Jews, as the limitation of sacred vows to one man and one woman is among Christians. Circumstances create the social, as Divine commands constitute the only moral, difference between the single and plural species of marriage.

CHR. I am replying to your objection affirming that, in the matter of polygamy, a contradiction exists between Judaism and Christianity. The word contradiction is a misnomer. Limitation and extension are, in this case, the proper terms to be applied. The sacred vows which Jacob plighted to Rachel were the same as he plighted to Leah: the handmaidens of Leah and Rachel were inclusions, and so understood, within the same sanctities. Had Jacob trespassed beyond this circle, he would have been an adulterer: within it he was none. The same rea-

soning applies to the instances of David, Solomon, and others, with whom the marriage-tie consisted in the obligation of sacred vows between many women and one man: with us it is between one woman and one man. The change forms a limitation or concentration, but no contradiction—and the difference here between Judaism and Christianity resolves itself into that readjustment, which every one concedes, of one and the same law: under certain circumstances expanding, under others contracting, its operations.

Inf. Supply me with an illustration of your principle.

Chr. Circumcision, as a covenant-sacrament, was a limitation to the Jewish people. Baptism is an extension of the same sacrament to all nations. The paschal sacrifice was a limitation within Palestine: the Eucharist is its extension over the whole world. The Temple of God's name and presence was a limitation within Jerusalem: its extension in the form of Christian Churches pervades all countries. The peculiar people were a limitation between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates: their spiritual extension embraces all nations, peoples, and races. On the other hand, as every previously-limited blessing became thus in Christ a catholic extension, so the moral purities became proportionably contracted or intensified. Judaism forbade adultery. Christianity forbids its source—in the volition or spirit. Judaism forbade divorce without a legal document of divorce. Christianity forbids it altogether, except for adultery. Judaism forbade false swearing: Christianity forbids swearing itself. Ju-

daism forbade excessive retaliation: Christianity forbids retaliation altogether. Judaism forbade hating a neighbor: Christianity forbids any man to be hated. These precepts are all limitations of previous extensions. The extension of the marriage state was in the same way limited or contracted by our Lord to what it had originally been in the beginning—in Paradise. The restitution of the Paradise law exacted correspondent Paradise purity of soul. Christians live under this code of the Restoration, and so far from seeing any contradiction between the expansion and limitation of the same law, we regard the Gospel as that expansion to which the law, by its very limitation, was provisional.

Inf. Polygamy now, then, is a sin.

Chr. Certainly.

Inf. Everywhere?

Chr. Everywhere—for every precept of Christ is Catholic, everywhere obligatory.

Inf. Nevertheless it seems that our British State, which permits something worse than polygamy—unions of man and woman without any recognition whatever of God in the matter—punishes bigamy as a transportable offence. How is that?

Chr. The State, not the Church, is responsible for the absurdities and inconsistencies of State legislation. I should heartily pity the woman who formed an alliance with any man on State principles, which, if adopted by the people of England, would inevitably reduce our whole female population to a more godless condition than even that of the Mohammedan women—*quod Dî avertant!*

Inf. Still it strikes me that any variation in moral principle must be tantamount to a contradiction or a violation.

Chr. Is a provisional government a contradiction to the government which it precedes as provisional?

Inf. No.

Chr. The Jews married two or ten wives?

Inf. Yes.

Chr. Christians marry one?

Inf. Yes.

Chr. In Heaven "they neither marry nor are given in marriage." Marriage does not exist in Heaven. Judaism was provisional to Christianity, Christianity is provisional to Heaven—Heaven is the state originally designed for man. As the wheel of the Church revolves from the depths of the fall to the heights of Heaven again, its spokes may be many—the Adamic, Noahic, the patriarchal, the legal, the prophetic—but its axle is one, Christ, and all these successions move round Him upward to the same point from which the fall took place. In that Heaven the true marriage—here symbolized by holy wedlock and its children, to symbolize which marriage was the first sacrament ordained of God between Christ and his Church,—will fulfil and supersede its types on earth.

Inf. You speak, I observe, as if we were going back to Heaven, and as if we were now seeking things again which we once lost, and which are waiting our recovery of them.

Chr. Yes. The things we lost are those we are seeking to recover—innocence, happiness, angelic

communion, Heaven, God. They have never moved: it is we who have moved from the fold and gone astray; where they ever were they still are; we are not where we were; our whole struggle is to return where God at first placed us: that being once effected in Christ, the second Adam, all the rest which God designed for Adam in his original position, will follow as of course—immortality, happiness, the eternity of the Divine union. The Heaven I regain is the Heaven I lost: the Heaven before me is that far behind from which I fell. It is one Heaven, and all the types of its things in the Church refer to its existence before as well as after the world. We are driven by sin and the sword of judgment from the western gate of Paradise: we wander on and on, pilgrims from it, ever remembering it, always looking back towards it. When our steps are farthest from it, at its very antipodes, Christ baptizes us—in Christ we continue walking, till, having compassed the round of this world of time, we come back again to the opposite and eastern gate, where Christ, and not the sword, is: there by Him received, and again paradised, we re-enter upon the possessions we ourselves had by sin lost, and by just judgment had been disinherited from. Thus we consider all law, Divine and human, in this world to be merely provisional: it is a substitute for the time being for that Love which is the only law of Heaven; merely a substitute, nothing more: now indispensable, hereafter incapable of existence, swallowed up, like all things else, in the victory of Christ and Love. The sacrament of the Eucharist thus, for instance,

lifts us above the law of present things, into that only law of the Church which prevailed before, and will prevail after all things, present and provisional, have passed away. As the children of God, this love is the only law we can live in: as inheritors of heaven, it is the only feeling the soul can rightly exist in: as members of each other, it is the only affection which the soul can rightly feel towards other Christians. The altar-unity of Christ being broken in the Church on earth, it thereby ceases to be the reflection of the Church that from everlasting was, and from everlasting will be, in Heaven: they that break that unity of love on earth, must of necessity fail of that Church in Heaven, which ever has been, and ever will be, and never can be any thing else than this very unity of love which they violate. Of this same love between Christ and the soul of the Church, holy matrimony is the sacramental symbol: its sanctity consists, not merely in itself, as the present law of God to us, but in that which it symbolizes as the law eternal of God—the love and union of Christ with the soul, and of the soul with Christ. The realization of this, which will take place in Heaven, will constitute that perfect union of the immortal soul with its only source of happiness, its only object of love, which marriage is now given us of God in our present state sacramentally to represent, and ever remind us of. The symbol expires where the reality is—in Heaven. For this cause also right-minded Christians have in all ages guarded with extreme jealousy the sacramental revelations of the Church: what they show to the

senses is of nature and of time, but what they symbolize to the soul is of God and eternity.

INF. You thus will not permit man to be an isolation in any respect.

CHR. No: is Nature an isolation from God? Is any part of nature or its laws an isolation from any other part? Are nations, hearts, minds, knowledges, isolations from each other? Is it possible, then, for the soul to be isolated and disconnected from its Creator, or from the laws of its own eternity?

INF. But that Creator, and that eternity, I must observe, are represented to us by the sacraments and Scriptures of the Church in such a light as to compel me to withhold my assent from the claims of the Church to a Divine origin. Now Nature is my God: the laws of Nature are to me the only revelation of God. But when I read in your Scriptures that God commanded the Israelites to exterminate—not all nations, as Newman asserts—but even the Canaanites, I affirm them to falsify the character of God. From such a deity, if my soul cannot, yet it would gladly be isolated. Such a merciless command never could have issued from a merciful God.

CHR. Your reasoning is, God is merciful: this command is merciless, therefore not from God.

INF. Exactly.

CHR. Whence, in the first place, do you derive your evidence that God is merciful?

INF. Your own Scriptures everywhere affirm it.

CHR. The same Scriptures represent him also as a God of justice, and the extermination of the Canaanites as an act of justice. If justice and mercy

were irreconcilable qualities, such as could not co-exist in the same Being, some appearance of weight might attach to your objection. At present I see none. A sovereign power in one case pardons; the same sovereign power, in another case, permits justice to take its course. What exercise of sovereignty, under any constitution, is of more frequent occurrence? Because the Crown, in many instances, enforces the law of death against capital criminals, does it follow that the Queen herself is a merciless being? or that, with reference to the welfare of all classes in her dominions, such enforcement is contrary to the soundest principles of mercy? What individuals are to her civilly, nations are to God—for, as we said, nations must receive judgment in this world. Murderers are hanged; is the Queen herself a murderess, because, under her, the law hangs the murderer? or does the Crown forfeit its characteristic of mercy, because she refuses to extend its exercise towards the vilest and most dangerous criminals? Common-sense dictates, no. Justice and mercy are attributes, the several actions of which may exist in perfect harmony in the same person. The extirpation of the Canaanites is an example of the justice of the Almighty upon a criminal nation, which no more impugns His mercy, than the execution of a hardened and blood-stained assassin would militate against the clemency of an earthly king. If you adduce the Scriptures as your authority for God being merciful, you must admit them also as authority for God being really and truly just. The destruction of the Canaanites was an act of simple

justice, under the law against national sins: instead of falsifying, it is in perfect keeping with every idea of the Almighty as a just and holy God. Against the vindication of such law by any powers or instruments the Almighty is pleased to select, not a word can be said which would not disqualify every human government from vindicating its own laws, by the hands of such executioners as it pleased to appoint —axemen, soldiers, hangmen—on the head of lawless and abandoned desperadoes. The utmost which can be objected is, "God might have displayed His mercy on the Canaanites:" well, He did so for four hundred years—a longer time, I think, than any other nation in the records of history, has been permitted to remain utterly corrupt and demoralized, without being also denationalized and destroyed. His mercy found no response. He then proceeded to judgment, and exterminated them by the hands of His executioners the Jews. His right to do so is not questioned, but you assert that an entire overlooking of the national vice and turpitude would be more in unison with your idea of the character of God. It may be with yours, but not with ours. Justice, not mercy, is certainly the first element of all government, of all public and private morality. It would, therefore, on the contrary, appear to me very suspicious if the records of Divine government supplied us with no examples of justice without mercy, as it does of innumerable instances of justice superseded by mercy.

INF. There is, nevertheless, something extremely harrowing in the supposition of a whole nation swept

off by Divine injunction; the heart refuses to assign such a command to God.

Chr. Because your heart, though professing itself not a Christian, has been moulded under the general impressions of that faith which presents the Almighty to us as the God—not of justice, but of Infinite Mercy in Christ. Such impression is correct. But, if you can, try to separate God from Christ; then give your reasons for the impression that God is Mercy, not Justice.

Inf. I derive it from Nature itself—the beauty of creation, the revolution of the seasons, the faculties of mind and body, the sense of enjoyment, the appetite for so many various pursuits of happiness, the pleasures emanating from the very consciousness of existence and health—all, and many more, being such reasons as are insisted upon in your pulpits as proofs of the goodness and loving mercy of God.

Chr. Which amount to this—that, whatever of good or of happiness we in our present state experience, we are indebted for its existence and enjoyment to God, as the Author of our being in this state. That is evident. Are you, upon the same ground, indebted to Him for whatever of pain, misfortune, and evil affects you in the same state?

Inf. What say you yourself?

Chr. I, being a Christian, know that nothing which comes to me in Christ from God can be aught else than good. But outside of Christ, what say you, as an Infidel, on the natural argument? If Nature tells you that He is the Author of your good, as you

define good, does she tell you that He is also the Author of your evil, as you define evil; for on the truth of these definitions the whole question really revolves? If she does not, she does not oppose the voice of revelation. If she does, then which preponderates—the evil or the good, the misery or the happiness? on that preponderance depends the moral character of your deity according to Nature, or what you deem Nature.

Inf. But that question constitutes the profoundest investigation of philosophy.

Chr. Why should it, if Nature be plain on the point? But Nature is, if possible, more than Scripture, the *crux philosophorum*. When called upon to interpret it, they are much in the position of Belshazzar's astrologers with regard to the writing on the wall; the wall is plain enough, but the writing thereon is not—it is inexplicable. You, as an Infidel, hold neither man nor nature to be fallen: yet you state nature itself proves to you this goodness and mercy of God. Where, I demand, are these attributes, when He, being almighty as well as good, permits such a vast amount of bodily pain and mental misery to descend upon, and from generation to generation afflict, creatures not sinful or fallen? Is that justice, much less goodness? Observe the conclusion, with reference to God, to which your denial of the sinful nature of man immediately conducts your natural argument. If you hold man's sinlessness, man's misery compels you to infer God neither good nor just—therefore no God at all.

Inf. There is an immense deal of misery of every kind, social, individual, corporeal, spiritual, in this world of ours.

Chr. Does any thing in man deserve or engender it? If not, what say you of God who permits it—is that goodness?

Inf. Frankly, no.

Chr. You absolve man, then, at the expense of God, or rather by utterly destroying any conception of a God. Is this the result of your argument of Nature? Does it not sound, at the best, superlatively unnatural and unreasonable?—the creature righteous, yet a sufferer; the Creator evil, in fact, a heartless tyrant towards his own creature. This, I apprehend, is the reverse of the induction intended: you prove by nature God not merciful, but worse than merciless.

Inf. You wish me to concede the fallen nature of man.

Chr. You see the direct consequence of denying it, it will not permit you to advance another step in your philosophy, except by binding you to maintain that greatest of absurdities, that the creature is more righteous than the Creator—man more sinless than the Almighty. It leaves you without even the notion of a God. Satan himself comes nearer than any senseless heathen idol to the idea at which you thus arrive. You do not intend this frightful inference; but what shall we think of the "intellect" of such Infidelity? Admit man's nature to be one of sin; grant misery in some form or other to be the inevitable development and seeding of sin; call this

seeding the law against sin—such law is just; nature and man himself, in all the laws he himself enacts, testify to its justice; God who decreed such connection between sin and misery comes then before us in no new character, but simply as not interfering between such laws and their operation on man. In Christ He does interfere; but that is mercy. Prayer will cause Him to interfere, and ever show this mercy. The Christian, therefore, believes all the good he enjoys to be the gift of God; but more, he knows all the misery he suffers to be, as its seed, in sin; this suffering he considers just, because sin is disobedience to that law of God which is holy, just, and good. For mercy he looks to God from another point and in another character than that of his first or natural birth. Now I do not say, "Believe this;" I only say, this theory is consistent with itself and in harmony with all its parts; all things under it seem to fall at once into their right places; it accounts for men and the world as they are; it forces us to feel that we are governed by a sovereign who has never tolerated wickedness with impunity: that our own sinfulness has not been incurred without a present and a fearful penalty upon our souls and bodies; our very suffering proves the sceptre over us to be of unfaltering and unswerving righteousness. That very righteousness again being pledged to us, and our salvation in Christ becomes to us as equally unfaltering a guarantee for the mercy, as out of Christ, it is seen and acknowledged to be, of the justice of God. The assurance of the righteousness of God in His justice is made to us the confirmation

of His righteousness in the truth of His mercy. Thus the more holy we believe God, the surer also we believe His love to us in Christ. If we suffer for sin justly as men, as justly shall such suffering cease forever in us as members of Christ. But what superstructure of any philosophy at all can you in this matter erect on the basis of Infidelity? Some such process of reasoning as you have attempted led the Manichæans in old times to conclude Satan himself to be God: some such leads the modern Hindoos to worship idols with the imputed properties of Satan. Why? they first deified themselves as sinless; but reasoned they, "We suffer a thousand evils: being sinless we suffer unjustly and unmeritedly; he who inflicts, permits, or connives at our miseries, must be a being delighting himself in the pains of others—the evil one. Nevertheless we are manifestly in his power, we are at his mercy; we must propitiate, we must worship him; sinless and innocent as we are, we must adore this cruel and evil being." This terrible error rose from the false premise, that man is not a fallen nature. Acknowledging no sin in themselves, men knew not in what light to regard the Supreme Power which thus permitted sinlessness to be a perpetual sufferer. The same inferences lay latent in the whole system of Pelagianism, which has partly for this reason undergone severer denunciations than many forms of less obnoxious heathenism itself from the councils of the Church. This species of Infidelity thus ends, not in simply disbelieving God, but by some astounding infatuation of "Infidel intellect" placing Satan himself on the throne of God.

INF. Oh! you assign results to Infidelity not necessarily involved in it.

CHR. "Pure infidelity"—belief in nothing—does not exist. Relative Infidelity infers positive belief in the contraries of Christianity. When Christianity teaches "there is a God," Infidelity, by demurring, means, "I believe something else than what Christianity does to be God." What that is, it never is able to give us any idea of.

INF. It is, as I have repeatedly said, Nature.

CHR. Yes, and as you have repeatedly exemplified, a nature of which the divinity vanishes at the first touch of the finger of a Christian child. Let us enter more practically into an analysis of this deity of Infidelity. Whatever visibly exists is either nature or artificialized from nature,—is that so?

INF. It is, what then—

"Est Deus quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris"—

the Universe is God—Nature in its plenitude is God.

CHR. Just so. And if so, every part of the universe is part of God, every creature in nature is part of God. A tiger is nature—is a tiger part of God?

INF. Ridiculous.

CHR. Not a whit more so than the whole system of Pantheism, which thus makes nature God. If nature be God, why deride the Egyptians, who, as Pantheists, consistently worshipped the basest beasts in nature? The African negroes worship, some a stone, some a monkey, some a venomous snake, each its own fetish. If nature be God, such worship is logically due and right—a stone being part of nature

is thus part of God: stone-worship, beast-worship, block-worship, reptile-worship, is not idolatry, but sound philosophy.

Inf. Nature is the only true deity, but whether in her meanest aspects or creations she should be worshipped, is a distinct question.

Chr. For whom? for philosophers? It is certainly none for a Christian. Questionable whether a man may worship a rat, a toad, a lizard! The absurdity is not in your inference, which is logically correct, but in the premise, that nature is the deity. If it be so, Pantheism is the true religion; every thing in nature being instinct with deity, may, perhaps ought, to be worshipped. The lowest Negro tribes, such as adore things horrible and not to be named, are, after all, not idolaters, but practical Pantheists, true logical philosophers; the intellect of infidelity appears to have attained its brightest lustre here!

Inf. But in despite of the apparent absurdity, why, nature being deity, should not each man select out of all nature any part or object he pleases, to worship as the symbol or representative of the whole deity of nature?

Chr. If nature be deity, I really do not see why he should not. Every individual, according to his taste and mental calibre, Negro, Hottentot, Tartar, Malay, might exercise his right of private judgment to the utmost extent in the selection of his gods; compared to most of them, a sagacious Newfoundland dog, or the Achilles in Hyde Park, would, I imagine, be very respectable deities. Now, what thorough trash,—it deserves no better appellation,—is

this Pantheism when reduced from the verbiage of the German "cloud-mind," to hard, matter-of-fact practice, as it is in the whole modern idolatrous world! The very Negro has absolutely forestalled in practice the conclusions of the Pantheistic "intellects" of Germany. Your table here is loaded with Infidel productions, most of them, I observe, originals or translations from the German—not one idea is there in them which was not thousands of years ago substantiated and concreted into idolatry as coarse and foul as the grain and features of its misshapen images. Nature, exclaims the Pantheist, is God. Try it; here is your cat, pure beast-nature; ask your servant to worship it. Reduce your Pantheism, as whole nations have done it, to practice. Your servant being unfortunately a common-minded English Christian, would probably resent the request by dispatching the innocent emblem of Pantheistic nature through the open door yonder with his anti-pantheistic foot. Nevertheless worse things than this domestic and serviceable animal have been adored by nations of Pantheists: we call them idolaters; for idolatry is nothing else than practical Pantheism. Infidel intellect it seems has not, apart from Christianity, in the nineteenth century, advanced further or soared higher than the fetishism of barbarian Africa.

Inf. But this is sarcasm, not argument.

Chr. Far from it. If much of the Infidelity of the day be Pantheism, or, as you word it, the notion that nature is the only deity, then is it in principle, and would be in honest practice, the vile idolatry of old

Egypt and of modern Nigritia. Any thing is God; any thing therefore may be worshipped; what the thing is, depending on the man's own choice and predilection. Is this the *ultima Thule* attained by the navigation of Infidelity on its own card and compass?

Inf. You assume the most degrading, the Negro view of Pantheism. Look at Nature—not in her lowest, but her highest developments,—in an Alexander, a Pericles, a Phidias, a Washington.

Chr. Pantheism not in its mere animal, but its human phase—hero-worship, as it is termed.

Inf. Well, hero-worship: the nature of such heroes is the highest manifestation of deity with which we are acquainted; we know nothing of deity higher than as it is evolved in such. The deity being nature and these being the highest natures, it follows they are the highest ideal or form we have of the Deity.

Chr. So reasoned Syria, Greece, Rome, of old: their gods were heroes deified; their religion hero-worship. Pantheism in this aspect is a plagiarism from the Greek mythology, a would-be reviver of the Olympian gods, adding a few moderns after its own peculiar taste to the catalogue.

Inf. And rightly.

Chr. And this "intellect" ends not where Greece, but the idolatry of Greece, stood eighteen hundred years ago, before Paul and Christianity shattered the miserable system to fragments. Where, my friend, is the "progress" of your intellect? It immediately, when left to itself, sinks down lower than the darkest of the Dark Ages to "Mars, Bacchus, Apollo,

nomina virorum"—great names among school-boys, and great conquerors no doubt in their day, but not precisely personages to enact the deity.

Inf. What higher representatives of Nature in her highest organization have ever existed? Why, therefore, should they not represent deity?

Chr. On pantheistic or idolatrous principles there is no more reason why they should not to the Greek or Roman heathen, than why a crocodile or a calf should not to a Negro heathen. Christians hold Pantheism in all its forms, from its lowest action in Boshmen to its highest in ancient Athens, to be unmitigated idolatry—a prostitution of the immortal soul to things as inferior to itself as mud is to mind, or a coal-cellar to the sun. But let us for a moment suppose nature to be the Deity; man, the highest genus of such deity; and the hero species the highest species of man. Let us concede with the bluff Spartans, "If Alexander wish to be a God, let him be a God." We will take a modern instance,—Carlyle's favorite "hero,"—Oliver Cromwell. If worshipped at all, it must be when he is living Oliver Cromwell, must it not?

Inf. Why?

Chr. Do you object to the worship of the live hero?

Inf. Few, during their lives, are acknowledged to be heroes.

Chr. The recognition, it seems then, not the fact, makes your hero. Cromwell alive on a pedestal, and England on her knees to him, is too strong an hypothesis for the wildest Pantheist. It must be Cromwell dead, then, Cromwell like the Roman emperor

after his apotheosis. Infidelity is here again anticipated in theory and practice.

Inf. The apotheosis would be the recognition of this hero-being.

Chr. Of the once Oliver Cromwell? How so? Where, after the dissolution of the material Oliver, would any Oliver be; for, as an Infidel, you deny the immortality of any soul in Oliver? Oliver corporeal, meanwhile, has resolved into a palmful of dust, which is really all of Oliver left you to worship. You will not assert that dust to be the whole of the once hero? Where then, or what then, according to this Pantheism, after death, is the Oliver whom it would heroize and deify? Nothing mortal or immortal but a little dust is left of him. It is not Oliver, nor a hero, but the sound of the letters by which the living Oliver was once signified, that your Infidelity would adore.

Inf. But something not corporeal may have passed at his dissolution from the "hero" to animate another being, which, in that other being, is still what once was the animating principle of Oliver Cromwell.

Chr. Immortal or mortal? Not mortal; otherwise, with Cromwell it would be dissolved. If immortal, you abandon Infidelity, and concede a soul within Cromwell which does not die with Cromwell.

Inf. Being Cromwell once, it may, after his dissolution, pass into and animate another organization of the same deity,—Nature,—remaining still cognizant of its previous life in Cromwell, and receiving emotions of happiness from the apotheosis of its hero state.

Chr. We pass already, then, from the infidelity of Pantheism to the immortality and metempsychosis of the soul—the old religion of the East and of Britain,—Pythagoreanism, Buddhism, Druidism. Here, again, Infidelity is sadly forestalled—"Pereant qui ante nos—" The modern intellect of your champions has certainly marvellously little freshness of imagination—nothing more novel than the Bardism of our British forefathers, nothing half so "splendide mendax" as the Metamorphoses of Ovid. This step is, however, a far higher philosophy, an approximation towards the truth. Pantheism itself cannot make a hero without first finding him a soul—that is, without ceasing to be Pantheism and becoming Pythagoreanism. Well, granting this transmissibility of the psyche or anima of life, where do you transfer Cromwell's—to some other Cromwell-like man?

Inf. It is impossible to suggest.

Chr. It may have passed into, and be at this moment, the psyche of some very unheroic creature indeed; but whether so or not, it has, at all events, ceased to be that part of the deity of nature once known and articulated as Oliver Cromwell. On either supposition, Pantheism or Druidism, Oliver has become a nonentity—the hero a vacuum: the hero-worship the worship of a sound, of sheer nothingness—thus literally realizing St. Paul's definition of an idol, "We know an Eidolon to be—nothing." This nothingness however is, it seems, the new "hero" of infidelity-worship. A national school-boy might pardonably smile at such nonsense.

INF. It reads in these authors very differently to the light in which you place it.

CHR. I do not doubt it: but in plain English it is as I have stated. The phraseology of these authors is intentionally adopted to obscure the truth and bewilder the soul. Obscurity of meaning, under a metaphysical mist of senseless verbiage, is their strength. Young men, therefore, rising from their perusal as young men will, without reducing their theories to distinct propositions, though they acquire no positive knowledge from their writings, nevertheless imbibe a vague general feeling that Christianity is not "the thing for superior intellects." For the masses, for the mediocrities, it is excellent, it is indispensable, and must therefore be patronized and supported. But their "intellect" places them above it. Now on this point of "intellect" the young are especially touchy: Infidelity gives them the opportunity of claiming it by the easiest of all processes: they have only to adopt the reasoning—"The rejection of Christianity as inferior to 'Intellect' is a proof of superior intellect: I reject it as inferior —therefore I am a superior intellect." Here are no college examinations to be gone through, but every young man can, by simply pronouncing himself an Infidel, raise himself in his own imagination to an equality with the minds which carry off the honors and wranglerships of the Universities. Thus there is established a most comfortable understanding between the man and his "intellect," on principles of mutual consideration, and charity of no ordinary

kind. By this argument indeed the whole heathen world—Islamites, Buddhists, Chinese, Savages, Africans—have all the "intellect" entirely to themselves. Christendom and Christians are the inferior mind-caste. Is that, think you, the fact?

INF. The heathens have never known Christianity.

CHR. Nor has one in a hundred of these men. We have seen how reckless Newman is in his allegations about the very texts of Scripture. It is well known that the great Infidel of the last century, Voltaire, confessed he had never in his lifetime read the New Testament. His attacks upon it were as if a man who has never mastered the first definitions of Euclid should spend fifty years in arguing against mathematics.

INF. I am not amenable to such imputation. Here is the Bible.

CHR. And here are forty or fifty anti-Bibles. Which have you studied most—the one or the fifty—the accused or the accusers?

INF. I determined to read both sides, and form my own conclusions.

CHR. Most fair and judicious. But why confine the question to one point—that between the books?

INF. Explain.

CHR. Christianity is something much broader, much higher than the Bible. Christianity is the living presence of God in Christ—of God the Holy Spirit—in the spirits of men. He comes to and dwells in these spirits by ways of which the Bible is only a record, or at best but a mental or literary channel. The Bible cannot preach, baptize, pray, admin-

ister the Eucharist, or the ordinances, or be the living priest or the living Church to any man. It was never intended of Christ to be such—it was to His living priesthood, not to the New Testament written thirty years afterwards by certain members of that priesthood, He said, "Go, teach and baptize all nations—I am with you always." To confound the province of the Bible, as the record of the Church, with the living Church itself is the great error of all schismatics. I would have the Bible in the hands of every Christian, as I would have the Army Manual in the hands of every soldier—but the Manual is not the army, nor the Bible the Christian Church. As reading the Manual will not make a soldier; or Aristotle on poetry, a poet; or Locke on logic, a reasoner; or Grotius on statesmanship, a statesman—so neither will the possession or reading of the Bible make a Christian. As the soldier, the poet, the reasoner, the statesman, are, though readers, something far more and above mere readers of the Manual, of Aristotle, of Locke, of Grotius—so is the Christian something much higher than a mere reader of the Bible. The operation of the Spirit of God on the souls of men is not limited to the Bible; there are higher and more universal channels of grace which have, in all ages, carried the work and blessing of God with them on the nations which received them. Europe, for instance, was converted by the Church, not by the Bible—the modern savage is converted by the missionary, not by the Scriptures. And this is strictly in accordance with the way and promise of Christ; were it other-

wise, what need of the organization of the Church, of bishops, priests, deacons, missionaries, at all, when dead print and paper could as well do the work now consigned and commanded, and only blessed by Christ when done by living souls to living souls? But Infidelity does not seem capable of viewing Christianity in other than two of its aspects—its Bible and its Priesthood. On these, as I suppose, its most vulnerable points, you manœuvre the whole hostile forces at your command. If you can hit upon apparent literary contradictions in the former, or point to moral contradictions between profession and practice in the latter, you deem the question with Christianity itself settled. Now the truth of Christianity, as the power and will of God to the soul of man, does not, in the first place, depend on the perfect accuracy, or supposed inaccuracy of the writings of Sts. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Paul, James. Could errors be detected in them, they would no more affect the truths of the religion under the inspiration of which they wrote, than the errors in the ephemeris of astronomers affect the truths of the science under the teaching and discoveries of which they write. Could Infidelity, by any means prove errors in the record, it would still, before it succeeded in affecting the truth of God Himself, have to encounter and explain the Power of God carrying out this truth in the conversion of ages and nations without the record. Extinguish the Scriptures entirely, which convey to us the knowledge of the fact that Christ said to His Church, "I am with you always," the truth and power of that Promise is not extin-

guished with the extinction of its record. The record might perish: Christ Himself would still be with His Church, would still prepare its way, and turn the hearts of men to the wisdom of salvation. The Scriptures, or the records of the Church, were for ages comparatively unknown to the world; but the action and ordinances of Christ and His salvation have never for a moment ceased their career, or failed of their promised effect. The transference of the power and glory of Christ Himself to the written record of the Church, is as gross a sin on the part of schismatics, as is the same transference by the Roman Catholic Church to the mother of Jesus Christ. Their Bibliolatry, indeed, is a lower species of idolatry, because it degrades Christ more than Mariolatry does. The Roman Catholic gives the glory of Christ to the Virgin Mother, the schismatic to the Book of his disciples: of the two, the latter is the worse error—a book is inferior to a woman; and to idolatrize a book is worse than to idolatrize a woman. Nor, in the second place, does the truth of Christianity, as the Spiritual Power of God, depend on the moral or immoral lives of its ministers, any more—to follow up our first illustration—than the truths of astronomy depend on the moral or immoral characters of Galileo, Newton, Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Hinde. Supposing all the astronomers who have ever lived to have been morally objectionable characters, the sublime realities of astronomy itself would remain as true as ever. The immorality of man does not affect the reality of either the physical or spiritual Truths of God. It may, and often does, turn those realities

against himself, but it does not destroy them. All men may be liars, says St. Paul; their being so would in no degree affect the existence of any one of the truths of God. What should we think of the mariner who, because many men of science have been also men of vicious indulgences, refused to use the compass which science has discovered? The sailor practically exclaims, "The morals of scientific men have nothing to do between me and my compass. Is the compass they have found and given me in itself true and trustworthy? I sail and navigate, not by their morals, but by their compass." So Infidelity may readily prove that thousands of Christians, priests and laymen indifferently,—for that which excludes a priest, will exclude also a layman from heaven, their baptismal vow being one and the same to the Lord of Heaven,—have led base and objectionable lives —how does that admitted fact touch the truth of Christianity itself? The objection, indeed, refutes itself. For how know you such lives to be sinful and immoral? Where is your standard of judgment? "Oh!" you reply, "Christianity itself." Thus it is by the teaching of Christianity itself, that the objector is enabled to ascertain what is in accordance, what is not, with sound morality. Christianity is the light by which your eye thus sees; because it exposes sad flaws in men professing Christianity, you strangely turn round upon the light itself, as if it were the cause of the very deficiencies it reveals, and which, without its beams, would perhaps appear very virtues and excellencies to the darkness of your natural mind.

Inf. But there ought to be uniformity between a Christian's profession and his life.

Chr. What Christian denies so trite a truism? But you are not, I think, aware of the admission involved in your dictum. Why should there be uniformity in a Christian's life and practice?

Inf. It stands to reason there ought to be agreement between a man's religion and his practice of it.

Chr. Does it so? Let us see. An East Indian Thug professes murder as the sacrament of his religion. The religion of murder by strangulation, as a sacrifice to the goddess Khalya, is his profession. Ought his practice to agree with his profession?

Inf. How can you propose such a question?

Chr. On the general principle you lay down of consistency between every man's religious profession and practice; why should it not?

Inf. Because the practice is murder.

Chr. His profession does not consider it such: with him it is religion, not murder. The fact is notorious.

Inf. His religion is a lie, and the practice of it a high crime.

Chr. You would not extend toleration to it?

Inf. I would exterminate it.

Chr. Without mercy?

Inf. Without mercy; for it would be the extremest cruelty to India to tolerate for a day such a murderous religion as Thugism.

Chr. And if all India were abandoned to Thugism—seeing a nation wholly corrupt cannot be corrected and reformed by aught of good in itself—how would you proceed then against Thugism?

Inf. Asia and the world must be saved from the extension of so destructive and pernicious a super-

stition. We must undertake its destruction ourselves.

Chr. But we are not Indians—we are foreigners and conquerors in India.

Inf. What of that? It is incumbent on every nation to extirpate a superstition, which, if not summarily dealt with, would depopulate the earth.

Chr. It appears to me, then, that you are quite prepared to re-enact and justify, in the nineteenth century, the wars of Joshua and the Israelites against the Canaanites and *their* murderous religion in old time—only the Jews professed to act under special commission from God: you, thinking such commission superfluous against Thugism, are ready to proceed on your own authority. How soon the Infidel becomes the self-commissioned Joshua! But we will pass that by as a very common incident in Infidel history. If the Thug's religion and practice were consistent, you would order such a thorough-grained miscreant to be hanged—as they do hang them—on the first tree.

Inf. Certainly—all nations, all laws, would sanction the execution.

Chr. Again. In the Feejee and other Polynesian Islands cannibalism is openly and undisguisedly a profession: an invitation to a stranger to a cannibal feast is the highest mark of distinction which can be paid him. What is here to be condemned, if it be not the consistency between a horrible profession and a horrible practice?

Inf. Proceed.

Chr. Let us return home. In our English cities

there are thousands of unhappy creatures avowing as their profession theft and prostitution. The horror here again consists in the agreement of their practice with their profession. The commencement of reformation would consist in the first act of downright inconsistency between the two.

INF. Evidently.

CHR. We should pronounce the man mad who praised a professed bravo, burglar, courtezan, cannibal, for living in keeping with his or her profession. The brutality and shame lie in the very fact that, however fearful the profession is, the individual's practice is in consistency with it.

INF. That position cannot be questioned.

CHR. Does it, then, stand to reason that there should universally be consistency between a man's profession and his practice?

INF. Clearly not universally.

CHR. You would think it a good sign, if any one of these individuals began to act contrary to his profession. Take, again, the Turk. He, acting in perfect consistency with his religion, purchases human beings for money, destroys all statues and paintings, spits upon all Giaours, and would, if he dare, thrust his sword into the man who refuses the Koran. Which would be right, consistency or inconsistency between faith and practice in his case?

INF. Inconsistency.

CHR. Why, again, in all ages, have very many men, in all false religions, been better than their religions? It is because they were fortunately the very reverse of being consistent with their profes-

sions—professions, the honor of which was "in the breach, not the observance." Now, how comes it that you would, in all these and similar cases, account inconsistency a virtue, but that you impute it to a Christian as a scandal and reproach?

INF. I see your scope.

CHR. The beauty and holiness of Christianity as the standard and guide of human life are thus the very things you take for granted, before you can urge the Christian's inconsistency in practice with such a profession as a reproach to himself. For the moral or spiritual knowledge, which enables the Infidel to address a reproach to a Christian, he is himself indebted to the light of Christianity. The truth, then, is this—the more contradictory every man's practice is to a false profession or religion in that wherein it is false, the better for that man's nature. The more contradictory it is to the only true, the only elevating religion, the worse and more disgraceful is it to his nature. Your objection, therefore, to Christianity, on the score of inconsistency of life in Christians, subverts your Infidelity. For why should a Christian be a Christian, or inconsistency in practice with Christianity in profession be a reproach, except on the ground that Christianity is indeed that God-delivered law, between which and the life of our souls there should be as little inconsistency as possible? Your objection assumes this: what becomes, then, of your Infidelity? But further, should you, foreseeing this necessary inference, hark back, the form of the question would stand thus:—you, as an Infidel, believe Christianity an impo-

sition: you reproach a Christian for not being what he professes, for not acting up to the full requirements of the imposition. How is it that you, who hold that every Christian professes a falsehood, blame him because his life is not in agreement with such falsehood? Should you not rather, on your admission made above, approve and praise him? Where, herein, is your own consistency as an Infidel?

INF. I must abandon this ground of opposition as untenable. But I still insist that men are deterred from being Christians, more by the unchristian lives of professing Christians, than by all other causes united.

CHR. Weak men are; men who fear but do not wish Christianity true, are; men who desire an excuse for not being Christians, are; but all these and other such-like minds are after all few and unimportant, in comparison with the vast masses in all ages whose common-sense has informed them that the reproach of a man not acting like a Christian is the most universal of all confessions to the truth, the obligations, and the necessity of Christianity itself. Yet none of these robust, strait-thinking, uncloseted multitudes ever expected a Christian to be without inconsistencies, or alleged such inconsistencies as an argument against the faith. Why? Christianity, itself, by one of its first doctrines, that every man is in many things a defaulter, enabled them to point to every one liable to such reproach, to every man, that is, without exception as a proof of—what? —of the untruthfulness?—no—of the universal truthfulness of the religion which had thus forewarned

sions -instructed them. Suppose, therefore, apparent discrepancies here and there in a record extending over four thousand years; let the precise line of demarkation between the fallibility and infallibility of the apostles and evangelists be as yet *in dubio;* let every priest be denounced as a spiritual bugbear to the laity; let the priesthood of Christ itself be proscribed as an imposition, a conspiracy, or "a craft," yet here are the enormous masses of your favorite human nature content from century to century to become, to believe, to live, and die as Christians; each conscious to himself of more or less inconsistency between his life and the holy faith he professes; each in his heart believing and revering that holy religion the more from the very distance between his practice and the holiness of its commands. Drop therefore the Scriptures and the priesthood. Answer the laities, answer the peoples. Objections to the Bible and the priesthood have been pretty much the same in all ages; but with the peoples they have never told against Christianity itself; they have indeed only elicited increased efforts to obtain a better executive, a more active administration of the pure religion itself. How come the objections which the peoples have always treated with practical contempt to carry any weight with philosophers? How comes philosophy itself to be the thing practically most despised, and Infidelity the thing practically most abhorred and feared by the peoples? Here we have, as you observed, the millions of the Continent, and of England, wholly or partially devoting fifty-two days in the year to the sanctifying of one only of the

great ordinances of Christianity. Let philosophy try to get them together one such day, it cannot; the peoples in fact despise it, why?—because all that is worth having or knowing in philosophy is theirs already in an infinitely higher form than philosophers understand or present it. A ranting preacher dilating to living souls on the destiny of souls, will gather a greater audience than the greatest of mere philosophers, lecturing on the properties of birds, beasts, fossils, metals, minerals, oxygen, and hydrogen. The most illiterate missionary will, with a few rough, broad enunciations of faith, open living fountains up in the hearts of his hearers, of which that philosophy which pretends to be "knowledge" has never known the existence or tested the power. If the peoples be right, what estimation must be formed of all philosophy apart from Christianity? If such philosophy be right, it only pierces Christianity through the sides of collective human nature, of the peoples which, according to Pantheism, are the aggregate of deity itself. In what a position Infidelity herein places its advocates! So strange as scarcely to admit of description. Infidelity is herein opposed to that which it declares to be Deity itself in a high form, human nature. Human nature, *en masse*, will have Christianity as the truth of God and the guarantee of immortality; over every grave it perseveres in the midst of tears in looking up to heaven, in holding fast its faith in the word and honor of God, in sobbing forth the unconquerable conviction of its soul, "He is not dead, he sleepeth; he will wake again to the life eternal." Infidelity, opposed to its

own deity, declares all this false; but this deity is herein Christian, and so, to crown the absurdity, the faith which Infidelity denies is the very faith which the deity of Infidelity—poor human nature—persists in believing and accepting as the truth. Confess this to be what Horace calls "insaniens sapientia," philosophy that has lost its senses and run mad.

INF. Well, we have diverged from the topic we were engaged upon, the extirpation of the Canaanites by the command of Jehovah.

CHR. You solved the objection to it yourself, I think, by insisting on the extermination of the Thugs by England. But let us revert to it again: we have examined it as an instance of the execution of the legal justice of God on national criminality.

Let us now substitute your own view of Nature as deity, and observe how she acts. By Nature we continue, I suppose, to mean the invisible and visible order of present existence—existence in action. And this, according to you, is the Deity. In its highest development, human and hero nature, we have already seen what the notion leads to; let us proceed to briefly analyze it in its lower manifestations. There are such things as war, famine, pestilence, epidemics, cholera, yellow fever, small-pox?

INF. Yes.

CHR. Have not whole tribes been exterminated; whole nations and continents depopulated by their action?

INF. Undoubtedly.

CHR. What causes war?

INF. There are many causes of war.

CHR. War between human beings must be induced by causes innate in human beings: ambition, ignorance, misconception, pride, rapacity, hatred, honor, glory, self-preservation, lust of aggrandizement. The causes of war must pre-exist in those engaged in war. The most fertile land is thus not the cause, but the object of war; the desire for its retention or possession in the human mind is the motive cause.

INF. Conceded.

CHR. We have thus, then, your highest genus of Deity, man, causing from age to age in every country of the world that which, when done in two solitary and very peculiar instances, by the order of Jehovah, you object to as irreconcilable with the true idea of deity. Your highest type of deity has, nevertheless, always been, and still is, on the grandest scale, doing this very thing—making war. The act of justice against the Canaanites destroyed, perhaps, one million of people. Your deity, nature in man, has probably destroyed—to say nothing of the objects in view—not less than a thousand millions. This is a fact of Nature; this Nature you hold to be the Deity, it is therefore a fact of the Deity; yet you say, to do one-thousandth part of what your acknowledged deity has done, is irreconcilable with the true idea of deity. If your objection, therefore, is valid as against the revealed idea of God, it is one thousand times more valid against nature as God, or as the expression of God. If it tells against Scripture, how much more against your own substitute for Scripture?

INF. Your induction strikes me as forcible.

CHR. But if you affirm "war" in man to be invariably wrong, the dilemma which follows is this,—nature, your deity, is and has been in its highest type a wrong thing ever since it assumed that type. Can the bathos of Infidel intellect descend lower? If war is evil, your deity, nature, is and ever has been evil. If your deity, on the other hand, inflicts this evil as a penalty only, as something external to itself, how can you object to the same infliction from the hands of Jehovah as a penalty against sin?

INF. I cannot so far take exception to your argumentative process.

CHR. Let us descend to another still lower phase of this deity, nature. Is the plague, the yellow fever, the cholera, "nature?" Are they also parts of the Deity?

INF. They are results of nature.

CHR. How?

INF. A stagnant swamp, a mephitic sewerage, an atmosphere of close, corrupted human breaths will generate or foster plague or cholera.

CHR. Suppose we grant such and similar conditions will generate it, which is, I think, more than I am warranted in doing. Foster and invite it they do; generate it, I think, they never do. Is the cholera in itself an evil?

INF. Certainly.

CHR. There are certain results then which Nature itself brings on, that are in themselves unmitigated, devastating, world-wide evils. Your deity, then, is, in some of its phases, the reverse of beneficent or merciful; in some of its most active and extensive forms,

it is purely an evil deity. Now Christians admit the existence of evil in the creation of God: its action often perplexes us, but no Christian has ever said, as Infidelity does, that this evil was God, or in any sense part of God. Yet at the very time you cite the existence of evil, as irreconcilable with the fact of an all-beneficent Creator, your own philosophy compels you to infer evil itself to be not a thing temporal or probationary of good, but part of the Deity itself. As long as there is deity, so long, by your reasoning, must evil itself be co-existent. Thus, again, is the worst half of Zoroaster plagiarized by the "Intellect" of Infidelity; the worst,—for in the ancient Persian creed, Ahriman finally perishes, and Oromasdes alone is eternal. In your modern Pantheism, evil or the devil is both part of and a co-existent eternal with God. It is thus impossible to carry on any process of reasoning on Infidel premises, without being obliged to enunciate the most blasphemous, as well as the most ridiculous deductions.

Inf. But you are not, I think, stating this part of the question fairly.

Chr. Let me hear, then, your view.

Inf. The plague, cholera, and all such sweeping maladies are results of nature in a certain state: under certain conditions of nature they are certain to be evolved. But it by no means follows that that condition of nature which is destructive of the genus, man, is therefore an evil in itself. It may be absolutely necessary to the production of greater good. Quoad us, as it were, it may be

evil: quoad greater beings than we, it may be good.

Chr. Man, you stated, was the highest genus, heroes the highest species of the highest genus, of the deity Nature. What greater beings can there be?

Inf. Well. But I now modify the expression. There may, I say, be higher forms of existence than any hero species of man. Man may suffer for the good of them, as animals do for the good of man.

Chr. Conceding your modification, how do you apply the principle of it in the present case?

Inf. It follows that hereafter, even by and through the destruction of man, beings greater than man may be formed out of the human elements themselves. The grain-food is in the earth before it is corn: the life is in the mother before it is in the child—so that may be in man which is the life and the food of another and higher being out of man.

Chr. Be it so. But this is Infidelity abandoned, not maintained. The principle you here lay down is akin to that of the Resurrection—very like that which Plato maintained, that death is the mother of life.

Inf. That which appears and is felt by us to be evil, may in reality only be the death-process of nature to a higher life, a greater good.

Chr. And you include such agencies as the cholera or plague in this death-process to a higher life?

Inf. Why not? Who knows? What is the destruction of a few regiments, when the destinies of future nations are being elaborated? What the ex-

tirpation of a few millions, when the eyes of all mankind are to be opened, through their destruction, to the great sanitary laws of Nature?

Chr. Is not your Infidelity here stealing an argument from Calvinism?

Inf. What I mean is this: in one sense cholera and the plague may be termed the effects of certain material conditions of nature—the swamp, the poisonous ditch, the irrespirable air. But Nature never intended man to live under such conditions. If he attempts it, he dies. The peculiar process by which he is decomposed under such conditions, we call the typhus, pestilence, cholera. The trying to live, under such conditions, is a perpetual violation of the laws of nature: he necessarily dies: the nature which he violates by doing what he is by his whole constitution forbidden to do, kills him for the violation. Nature, by his death, thus avenges the infringement of her own laws. The next generation, seeing the effects of the infringement, observe those laws: they escape the cholera and the plague: they are so far, therefore, a healthier and a higher race than those which perished.

Chr. And this Nature is your deity: this process is the penal process of such deity?

Inf. And is it not visibly true? Does not all science prove that by such devastating maladies as the yellow fever and the cholera, Nature is, after all, doing nothing more than avenging man's violation of her laws, as they bear upon himself?

Chr. And is she right?

Inf. Why—what pure absurdity it would be to say

she was wrong. She must be right, because she is Nature.

Chr. But her victim, man, is nature also—and the highest organization of nature.

Inf. He suffers in this instance, because he violates the very laws of that nature of which he is the highest organization. Why does his nature, constituted to live on the free, wholesome, unbarriered earth, and to breathe the pure unconfined air of heaven, sink itself into that of a noisome marsh-reptile, burrowing in filth, and imbibing a venomous atmosphere at every pore? If he will degrade himself into such vermin, the law of his nature exterminates him and his race.

Chr. Nature avenges the violation of her laws by the infliction of the most terrible penalties, at the cost of millions of human lives, from India to New Orleans, from Batavia to England. Her penalties in fact, gird the world. She is your deity. How then can you, who contend for such acts as inseparable from deity, object them to the character of God, as revealed in Scripture? If certain such acts were not revealed as His, there would ensue, by your reasoning, a mutilation in His character or attributes as the Deity. Your objection here again tends to confirm the truth of those Scriptures. Your deity, Nature, perpetually avenges the infraction of her laws by the most destructive and fearful punishments: she must be, you allege, necessarily right. God avenges the infraction of His laws—of man's degrading himself from his original state to the level of such vermin as you describe—by one or two

signal instances of judicial execution. You say it cannot be: it is inconsistent with all true ideas of deity. Nature, from century to century, in every land, and under all conditions of life, is paying man back according to his folly, blindness, stupidity, ignorance, perversity, criminality. He whom Christians believe the God of Nature, reveals Himself as doing once or twice what Nature, with the most inflexible impartiality, is at all times doing towards every man, or aggregate of men, that take it upon them—in ignorance or not—to infringe her laws. God, you contend, never could give such a command as the extirpation of the Canaanites: whatever being gave it could not be God. You, then, immediately append: Nature invariably avenges the violation of her laws. She admits no excuse, makes no allowance for ignorance. It is the very ignorance which places itself in antagonism to her laws, that sweeps populations away—what cares Nature for that? She slays her millions: if she did not, if she permitted any condition of the mind to be pleaded as a right of exemption from obedience to her fiat and precepts, she would not be deity. Observe what you exchange —a God of rare severity, for a deity that never, in one instance, overlooks a violation of its laws. If England choose to put itself in a position of hostility to such laws, it must perish as inevitably as would a horde of naked savages. If England is content to remain under cholera conditions, the sword of the justice of nature will infallibly smite within her man, woman, and child, with equal indifference as within a clan of houseless Patagonians. And this

very fact of never sparing, never knowing what mercy is, you prefer as the clearest proof that it is deity. When God exercises, in one or two instances, the same power, that is the clearest proof He is no Deity. How can sense or consistency be extracted from such wild contradictions?

INF. Nevertheless my view of Nature is right. She never does forgive: she forgives no one: she knows no distinctions: she is no respecter of persons: if a Shakspeare or a Wellington puts himself under cholera conditions, she would immolate him with the same stern indifference as she would the veriest savage on the face of the earth. There is something grand in such impartiality.

CHR. Of the grandeur I say nothing. The fact is indisputable. But when a Christian professes to believe "every soul that sinneth must die"—be it that of Shakspeare or a Hottentot—lo! though the analogy with the laws of Nature is complete, you demur admitting as a truth, with reference to God, what you strenuously contend for as truth in reference to Nature. Now, by comparing what Nature does by certain agencies to our bodies in the material world, with what God does by certain other agencies to our souls in the immaterial world, it is wonderful in how many respects faith is, after all, the extension of sight and vision. It is, indeed, the pure vision itself; it is real seeing; for, as St. Paul expresses it, it is seeing the invisible. In the present instance, how entirely Nature compels you on the evidence of science, and of your own sensible experiences, to recognize as facts of universal prevalency, the very principles

which you refuse to accept when embodied in the doctrines of Christianity. If such be the doctrines of Nature, they must, on your theory, be the doctrines of the Deity. How much more, then, must that Christianity which revealed them in their highest, that is, their spiritual form, ages before science discovered them in their lowest, be the religion of the Deity? Thus, from whatever point we view the subject, Infidelity is driven by Nature itself into a faith which, if not Christianity, is in marvellous analogy with it. Marvellous, I mean, to you. To us who hold Nature and Christianity to be only the visible and invisible, the physical and spiritual revelations of one and the same Almighty Being, it is an additional proof of the identity of the principles of our faith with the truths that rule the material universe.

Inf. But Christians appear to me to see more in Christianity than is really contained in it.

Chr. Not so; but the reverse. None has ever yet mastered Christianity in its fulness. In comparison, indeed, with Infidels, we do see more. Newton saw more in the firmament than other people: a geologist sees more in a rock than other people: a botanist sees more in a field than other people: a physician sees more in a face than other people. Every scientific man sees more than others in the subject-matter of his science. So is it with the Christian. But as Newton never professed to see more in his discoveries than the first breakings on the shore of the mind of the ocean of infinity, so the Christian, though comparatively he may know more

than others of Christianity, never professes to know it absolutely further than in part. A spiritual science it is, the harmony of all the components of which shames the architecture of the heavens. A Christian may, therefore, see in Christianity—and truly—much that is invisible to the Infidel vision, which is affirming no more than that the mind which has long studied Nature, has its eyes opened to countless truths in that great field of research which entirely escape the observation of such as have never devoted their attention to the pursuit.

Have you many more objections in reserve?

Inf. You have directly or incidentally adverted to the greater number of those which appeared to me to be entitled to serious consideration. I shall concentrate such as remain upon these two points. I take exception to the whole system of miraculous agencies recorded in your Scriptures, and I firmly refuse to admit the existence of such a state or place as Hell.

Chr. We shall be able, perhaps, to deal with both points at once. You disbelieve the miracles of Scripture. Let us specify some of the miracles of Nature, and see how far our faith or credulity in them extends. Science proves, and we believe such miracles, for instance, as the following:

The air is capable of solidification, liquefaction, and color.

A pressure from "without" of fifty miles deep of such air surrounds the earth.

Every adult supports a pressure on his own person of thirty thousand pounds' weight of this air.

Except for such an enormous compression from without man would explode.

Except for this air sound and life, including within them reason and language, could not exist.

Many plants breathe, perspire, propagate by sexual distinctions, and possess a circulation of sensitive life.

The age of many trees, which are, as it were, the aristocracy of plants, exceeds four thousand years.

There are, at least, no less than 70,000 distinct species of such trees and plants.

The smallest insects are the architects by whom islands and continents have been built up out of the water.

The Pyramids are constructed of stones formed of the concretions of minute shells of these insects; and all the chalk hills and chalk strata of the world are nothing but their excrements and remains.

Among land insects, the white ant and the bee have lived for thousands of years under hereditary institutions of established loyalty and order.

Others of these insects have thirty thousand eyes.

There have existed tribes of frogs, lizards, flying dragons, equal in dimensions to bisons, hippopotami, elephants.

The whole earth was once nothing but slime.

The earth, fifty miles beneath its surface, is in a state of fiery fusion.

The earth, and, as far as we can infer, nature itself, has been at least a dozen times destroyed and again created.

If the earth were a little nearer the sun, it would be liquefied, and pass away "in smoke," by evaporation.

If the earth were where any other planet is, or any other planet where the earth is, the whole solar system would be thrown back into chaos.

The moon is a world destitute of all vital air, water, vegetation, and verdure—a horror of unbreathing lifelessness.

Mercury is a world where granite would instantly fuse.

The sun attracts and discharges comets to and from distances of 70,000,000,000 miles from itself.

The moon revolves round the earth, the earth round the sun, the sun round a centre in the Pleiades, that centre round some other, and so on from centre to centre, in the invisible Infinite.

There are 18,000,000 such suns and systems as ours in the Milky Way alone.

The nebulæ, or sun-stars of Orion, give us light at a distance requiring 60,000 years for its transit.

This light travels at the rate of 12,000,000 miles per minute.

Beyond the furthest fields of telescopic vision there are other systems never to be visible to us on earth, because the light proceeding from them is, from their remoteness, decomposed in its transit before it reaches us.

That part of the universe, the vision of which is commanded by the earth, is thus necessarily limited —it may not be 1,000,000,000th part of it.

There are behind these physical worlds invisible

and semi-immaterial powers—heat, light, ether, galvanism, electricity, life.

Here are a few articles selected from the creed of modern science—do you believe them?

Inf. You have selected certain conclusions which scientific men accept as capable of demonstration. I do not, therefore, believe them—I know them to be true.

Chr. Have you demonstrated them yourself?

Inf. No.

Chr. You accept them on the testimony of science and scientific philosophers?

Inf. I do.

Chr. Such acceptance, I conceive, is faith or belief. Be that as it may, you confess them realities. We are now discussing "the miraculous." Do the Scriptures or the Christian creed contain any article so "miraculous," or drawing so largely on the credulity of the world at large as many of these articles of science do on the unscientific world? For instance, the first article of our Creed is, "I believe in God the Father Almighty." Whoever or whatever made and still regulates the universe, must be at least intellectual. We must admit the Creator of the intellect of man to be himself intellectual—must we not?

Inf. Well.

Chr. It is evident, also, the universe is taken care of—though not by man, your highest form. He, poor creature, is asleep—cannot do without sleep one-third the time his own earth goes round, every

twenty-four hours, on its own axis. Everywhere there exists that order and punctuality, the attainment of the knowledge of which makes science science. Without such pre-existent order, science—astronomy for instance—could not exist.

Inf. Clearly not.

Chr. The most natural title for human beings to adopt and use towards one who, for love, takes care of persons and things is a Father. That such a Father is the same with the Creator of the universe you do not, I suppose, deny. In judging of His Power by His works,—a few of which these articles of science have specified,—is it possible to demur to His being Almighty? Can we imagine any work or effect which the power that has thus already created, and is now sustaining the universe and its operations, cannot at His will produce?

Inf. We so far concur.

Chr. In that case all objection to the miraculous or supernatural in Christianity falls at once to the ground; nature is as full of the stupendous, the wonderful, the apparently incredible as the Scriptures. It is the ignorance, the gross ignorance of man, which, both in nature and the Scriptures, causes him to dream of such terms as "the incredible, the impossible," as applicable to God.

Inf. So far as the miraculous in facts is concerned, the creed of science draws heavier bills, perhaps, than the creed of Christianity on the bank of faith. If I rejected science on the score of its wonderful revelations of nature, I should be rejecting it for the

reasons which, of all others, ought to recommend it most fervidly to my acceptance—its grandeur and sublimity.

CHR. Good; nor do you, I think, reject the human facts of the life of Christ.

INF. I must admit them.

CHR. And as a fact you are also obliged to admit the existence of the Catholic Church in the world, calling itself the kingdom of Christ.

INF. I am.

CHR. With reference then to the other articles of our Creed, it is not the miraculous element in them to which you object? By the side, indeed, of the miracles of God in nature, they sound as plain and simple as it is well possible for Omnipotency to exhibit itself in action. Neither is there one of them which does not affect the being or well-being of man in his highest destinies, more than all the facts of all the physical sciences put together pretend to do.

INF. Nature herself, I grant, throws any objection to Christianity on the ground of the miraculous out of court. But I contend that all these articles of science are demonstrable by infallible processes to be true, whereas there exists no such processes to demonstrate the truth of the articles of your creed. I do not object, therefore, to them because they are miraculous, but I deny them to be facts at all.

CHR. You abandon, then, the anti-miracle ground?

INF. Entirely. I take my position upon the non-existence of the facts alleged.

CHR. Are these facts capable of demonstration by human evidence?

Inf. Ah! you would bring me, I perceive, into collision with Hume.

Chr. Perhaps so. Hume contends no amount of human evidence can verify a miracle. You, on the contrary, state the mere fact of a work being a miracle is no bar to its reception.

Inf. Not to me, nor, I think, to any practical man.

Chr. Because every practical man sees that Hume begs the whole question as to what nature is, and as to what a miracle is. His sophism is,—"A miracle is something contrary to the whole course of nature: any thing contrary to the whole course of nature is an impossibility; no evidence can prove an impossibility: therefore no evidence can prove a miracle." By this process of reasoning there is not a single scientific discovery which might not before its achievement have been pronounced an impossibility, the accomplishment of which was not to be demonstrated by any amount of sensible evidence. Without a full and thorough knowledge of all the resources in nature, how can any man pronounce what is, or what is not, contrary to nature? This is the first great fallacy. If, on the other hand, we define nature as the known routine of physical laws on matter and men, then, again, the question as to whether such routine has ever been suspended, annulled, or modified, must be decided by evidence. The implied denial that miracles are a question of facts, and that facts must in every case be determined by evidence, is Hume's second fallacy.

Inf. Hume contends that such a statement as that

of the Resurrection cannot be proved by any amount of evidence, because it is opposed to all experience of nature.

Chr. To which we reply, the Resurrection, like every other fact, takes its stand upon its own evidence. And, secondly, we accept the fact proved by such evidence as in unison with innumerable other facts demonstrating the existence of a God absolutely supreme above all the laws of nature, by whom alone nature and her laws are what they are.

Inf. You ascend, thus, beyond Hume's reach.

Chr. We do, just as the man of science ascends above the ploughman's reach. When he tells him that he supports on his own body 30,000 lbs. weight of atmospheric pressure, what would be the illiterate ploughman's reply? "It is contrary to all experience of nature; neither he nor any one else had ever felt such a weight; all the academies in Europe should not convince him contrary to his senses." Which would be right, science or the ploughman?

Inf. Science, of course.

Chr. Again; are geologists correct in stating that nature has repeatedly ceased to be what nature previously was?

Inf. I suppose so.

Chr. Nature, then, as constituted at present, is nothing more than perhaps the tenth or twentieth universal miracle which has been wrought by the Power above nature.

Inf. In that case all present nature, considered with reference to the past, is a new miracle.

Chr. Clearly: was not the first creation of man

a complete innovation on previous nature? Comparing A. M. 5858, with A. M. 1, are there not millions of miracles in the forms of men and women meeting our senses every day which had no previous existence whatever, except, as Plato and Newton would express it, in the sensorium of the Deity?

INF. Conceded.

CHR. Present nature, then, is a new heaven and a new earth with new inhabitants, as compared to precedent nature.

INF. According to modern geology.

CHR. How many such creations have taken place in the revolutions of time?

INF. Perhaps seven.

CHR. Perhaps seventy and seven. You swallow with the utmost complacency the new heavens and new earths of science; you pride yourself on knowing all about the changes of geology—it is science—it is shameful in these days to be ignorant of such doctrines! But when the Scriptures propound a cognate truth, forthwith you exclaim, "Impossible! incredible!"

INF. What cognate truth in this respect?

CHR. That the present heaven and the present earth will make place for a new heaven and a new earth, and that new creatures, men celestialized and spiritualized, will be resident therein. In ten or a dozen such changes past you do believe. In one more such change to come, though it be in perfect analogy with the past as elucidated by science, you not only decline to believe, but reject it as an impossible miracle. Is that which by the evidence of

science, has already taken place times indefinite, an impossibility to take place again? Is it not rather, by all preceding analogies, a possibility which is sure to become once more a fact? "The heavens shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt, but we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."[1]

INF. But such a declaration as this of St. Peter's would thus be as much science as prophecy.

CHR. Exclude the words, "wherein reigneth righteousness," it may be both. What prevents God from delivering as prophecy a fact which after-ages discover to be also in entire unison with His government of the universe in antecedent periods? The next great change will be—because righteousness will reign supreme and alone therein—the consummation of all the preceding changes, the final form in which they will all "rest,"—the eternal sabbath of creation passing on to it through successive stages of travail, each like the mother producing out of itself its own future existence. For this very reason change will cease, and immutability begin.

INF. To that conclusion no one would object. If the future heavens were inclusive of every sentient being who has ever existed, I should be well disposed to believe the religion which taught so glorious and blissful a state of finality. But Christianity proposes an immutable hell as well as an immutable heaven. Rather, therefore, than accept one on the condition of accepting both, I reject both together.

[1] 2 Pet. iii. 12.

CHR. You do not believe in the existence of hell?

INF. No, the supposition is too horrible.

CHR. Do you disbelieve it as a place?

INF. I disbelieve it *in toto*.

CHR. What say you then to the existence of Mercury? Is not that planet, compared to ours, a world of fire?

INF. But there is no life there.

CHR. How know you that?

INF. If there be, it must be attempered to an atmosphere of fire.

CHR. Forever?

INF. I do not say forever; but if attempered it must be life without pain.

CHR. It is possible, and the reverse is possible.

INF. How?

CHR. Men settle in the swamps of the Mississippi: such and such is the climate. Do they become attempered to it?

INF. Yes.

CHR. Without suffering effects which adhere to them as long as they live, be it ten or forty years?

INF. The constitution must of course be in some way permanently a sufferer.

CHR. It is possible, then, that a world may exist the climate of which is itself a pain-inflicting medium on every object endowed with life under its action. We have before our eyes, in Mercury, the fact that a world of fire comparatively near us does exist in creation. Hell, therefore, considered simply as "a place," a place of fire, is quite in analogy with the facts of astronomy. The fact physical is all which

astronomy can teach; such teaching, so far as it goes, confirms the declaration of Scripture.

Inf. But hell is generally believed by the mass of Christians to be beneath the earth.

Chr. If there be a hell, it can matter little where it is. But the popular belief may place it rightly.

Inf. Nonsense! a hell under the earth!

Chr. The earth is about 8000 miles in diameter. Fifty miles below its crust, if physical philosophy and science are to be received as authorities, granite can only exist in a state of fusion, "it melts with fervent heat." What must be its temperature one thousand miles below?

Inf. It may be a vast hollow.

Chr. True, of fire and fusion, which approaches, I apprehend, very near the immemorial idea of hell.

Inf. But I do not believe philosophy and science on this point. What more than we can they know of the interior of the globe?

Chr. Or, as the ploughmen say, How can they more than we know that we carry 30,000 lbs. of air upon our backs? Well, you must settle such points with them. My statement is that science, be it right or wrong, corroborates not only Scripture on the fact of there being a world of fire, but the ancient idea of the whole of mankind, heathen and Christian, that such a world is the centre or abyss of our earth.

Inf. Not where souls are imprisoned and punished—science is guiltless of that addition.

Chr. Science in this, as in every other instance, can only walk up to a certain height with Chris-

tianity. There Christianity expands her wings and directs her flight to realms it is permitted science only to gaze far off upon, while her sister of Divine birth is lost to her vision in the ever-rising ascents of her native eternity. But so far as the mortal sister can go, she walks hand in hand with the white-robed daughter of God. The Scriptures reveal a world of fire. Science, is it possible? "Not only possible, it is a common fact in the systems of the universe." Popular faith places hell beneath our feet, in the centre of the earth. Is it true, O Science? "It is true that such a place as hell is popularly supposed to be exists in the interior of the earth; as to its connection with the future state of man I know nothing."

INF. Science then fails you on the very point on which you need its evidence.

CHR. Not so. You, as an Infidel, denied the possibility of the existence of hell as a place at all. Science refutes your position by showing there are such worlds as correspond in substance, and one beneath our feet both in substance and locality with the popular religious idea of the nature of hell.

INF. Well, grant so far; grant even the interior of our own globe to be an abyss of fire and fusion; how can a soul suffer pain? How can such a place be one of suffering, penal or purgatorial, to a soul?

CHR. You have seen a dead body.

INF. Often.

CHR. If you applied fire to its hand or foot, would it suffer pain?

INF. No.

Chr. If you applied fire to the hand or foot of a living body, would it suffer pain?

Inf. Certainly.

Chr. It is not the body then, *quasi*, simply body, but life in the body which suffers. The greater the life or nervous power, the greater is the capability of suffering. No life, no suffering or pain.

Inf. That is clear.

Chr. Is there such a thing as suffering distinct from bodily suffering? Is there such a thing as purely mental or spiritual suffering?

Inf. No doubt of it.

Chr. When the body, therefore, suffers, it is life in the body which suffers. Distinct from the body this life, call it in man what you please, mind, spirit, soul, has a suffering of its own; but, distinct from this life, the body itself has no capability of suffering. I am speaking of man in his entirety.

Inf. Proceed.

Chr. Will you term this principle the soul?

Inf. The name matters little, so the thing be understood between us. Term it the soul.

Chr. The soul, then, is that life within us by which we—either through the body, or distinct from the body—are susceptible of suffering.

Inf. But we are discussing the material suffering of fire as applicable to the soul in hell. You do not contend that, apart from the medium of the body, the soul can be susceptible of bodily or material pain?

Chr. Certainly not. We have conceded the soul to have a suffering of its own, quite distinct from

those communicated to it through material media. We have conceded, also, that separate from the soul in man these material media have no susceptibility of suffering in themselves. But I fully admit that material suffering, such as that felt from fire, can only be felt by the soul through material media, such as the body.

INF. Animals have life—are susceptible of suffering—but that life is not a soul.

CHR. Man is something more than an animal, and we are speaking of that principle within him by which he feels pain and delight as man, and not as an animal. Cattle have no principle within them susceptible of a thousand emotions of pain and pleasure of which the principle in man is susceptible. Is not that most evident? What do mere animals know or feel, I do not say of any *purely* mental, spiritual, or moral emotion, but of any moral, spiritual, or intellectual sensation at all? The principle of susceptibility to such things is not in them: in man it is. We agreed to call it, the soul.

INF. Well!

CHR. The question, then, stands thus. The body, without this soul, is not in man capable of pain. With this body it is capable of—first, material pain, such as mere animals suffer, such as the body in its animality suffers; secondly, of immaterial pain, proper to itself, and altogether independent of material media.

INF. What follows?

CHR. It follows—first, that that which is cast into hell must, of necessity, be this life or soul itself of

man, which alone imparts to the body the capacity of pain. For the body without this principle not possessing susceptibility, to cast it alone would be no more than the ancients did in consigning their dead friends to the funeral pyre.

Inf. A very graceful mode of restoration to the four elements.

Chr. If hell be the place of retributive suffering for the wicked, that of the wicked which is cast in must be that life or soul by which also they were wicked.

Inf. Proceed.

Chr. Supposing the soul or life alone to be there condemned, you admit it would, under all contingencies and events, suffer the pain proper and peculiar to itself, be it in a material medium or not.

Inf. If you carry hell no further than spiritual pain or remorse, I do not think I should dissent so much from the idea.

Chr. I dare say not—but Christianity cannot accommodate itself to your ideas on the subject. It goes much further. We see, then, that a soul cannot only suffer pain, but that alone which does suffer human pain in the body or out of it, is the soul: without this life the body, in or out of hell, has no more sense of any kind of suffering than the stone in the road, or the iron in the furnace. Now, if the life itself be condemned to hell, it is, I conceive, a secondary consideration, whether its suffering there be only spiritual, or both spiritual and material; but you, I infer, do not think so?

Inf. Certainly not: I think just the contrary, and

so, I believe, do ninety-nine men out of a hundred. I think the material suffering the primary, the all-important question.

CHR. Well, it may be so—I will raise no difference on that point. But will you give your reasons for such opinion? Why should the material suffering be the primary consideration?

INF. Because, to speak frankly, I do not think men in general care a fraction for spiritual suffering or remorse compared to what they do for bodily pain. It stands to reason they should not. The more insensible any thing is, the less—as you state—is it susceptible of suffering. Now, the consciences of most people in the world are quite insensible to purely spiritual considerations, consequently quite insensible to any spiritual pain for the neglect or violation of them.

CHR. There is, I think, much truth in your statement; but observe to what conclusion it forces you. If hell consisted of spiritual suffering alone, it would, by your reasoning, be no hell at all to the characters that have no conscience, the very characters for whom it is designed. The very fact of their having no conscience would cause it to be no hell of the soul, no place of spiritual remorse to them.

INF. Precisely. There can be no suffering of conscience to such as have petrified the conscience—no suffering of the soul to those in whom the soul has long been as dead and insensible as a cannon-ball.

CHR. But it would, nevertheless, still remain a hell of the soul to all such as had not entirely, in this life,

extinguished the sense of conscience, or the vitality—so to call it—of the soul.

Inf. It would.

Chr. In other words, the hell to which you do not except, a hell of spiritual but not material pain, would be none whatever to the very characters whom God and man alike arm themselves against and abhor; natures without pity, humanity, soul, or conscience. It would be hell only to such as still retained some sensibilities of their better being. Grant some conscience to remain in a man, that remnant becomes his hell: grant none whatever, that "none" becomes his total exemption from the possibility of all suffering in hell. Such a hell is a premium, not a punishment, for utterly quenching conscience. For how can pain of conscience affect a Nero, a Borgia, in whom the thing itself has long ceased to exist? We might, with as much sense, talk of a tiger feeling the hell of spiritual remorse for the infant he has devoured.

Inf. I am, I fear, in a difficulty here.

Chr. Is not this notion of a mere spiritual hell the reverse of what mankind have, in all ages in some form or other, held hell to be—a place of just punishment hereafter for those whom justice has failed to reach in this world? Your theory, which is too the theory of a certain stamp of modern religion wishing to be thought Christianity, proffers redemption from suffering as a premium upon the worst and blackest degrees of villany and crime. Provided a man be only so deep a miscreant as to have cast away all sensibility to good, forthwith his

very excess of depravity becomes his reward, his guarantee against pain. But let him retain some tenderness of conscience, some capability of penitence, contrition, sorrow, then in exact proportion to the amount of such tenderness you assign a spiritual hell and its pains to him. The ancients would hardly have selected their Minos from the ranks of Infidelity.

Inf. I had never reasoned the subject out to this extent.

Chr. Shall we admit, then, that a mere spiritual hell is none at all to the very characters whom—not to allude to the Scriptures—the universal judgment of mankind pronounces as only fit to be condemned to a separate world by themselves, to be, in fact, transported from the state in which, in defiance of all law and persuasion, they have become incurably vicious themselves, and nuclei of deadly infection to others? Human governments, in dealing with such subjects, are compelled to adopt a course analogous to that which God has declared will be His course on the day of His judgment. Separation for years or for life in one case, for eternity in the other, is the principle of legislation. In both cases it is separation of two contrary classes of soul into contrary localities: here political, as well as before scientific analogy, is in accordance with Christianity, and condemnatory of Infidelity. Human law finds it can deal with certain characters in no other way than the Divine has declared they will finally be dealt with by itself.

Inf. But I can never persuade myself that hell is a place of bodily or material pain.

Chr. If it be not, there is not, on your supposition, any hell for such as are universally pronounced most deserving of it. Choose, then, between no hell at all, or a hell of material as well as spiritual pain; for no hell at all is certainly less a premium on utter and irredeemable depravity than the one you suggest.

Inf. No hell at all, then, certainly. I will not believe in an eternity of future bodily pain; it is too frightful a conception to be for a moment entertained.

Chr. Do you believe in pain now?

Inf. I must; feeling is believing.

Chr. Material pain exists here—in the next world why should it not also exist?

Inf. It may; there is no proof that it does.

Chr. There is no shadow of proof it does not: there is every reason to infer it will and must. Is there not such a thing as *just* punishment?

Inf. It cannot be doubted.

Chr. Our nature derives all its notions and feelings of justice from the Creator of that Nature, from God. He must, therefore, be justice itself. If man be just, how much more God his maker? It must also be acknowledged, that in all ages scenes of the most revolting cruelty, extending from the throne to the cell of torture, have been perpetrated by classes of men—perpetrated often as the rule, not the exception of government—sufficient to freeze the blood with horror. Now can you in your heart believe that the God who has implanted in us these feelings of indignation,—feelings so deep and vehement that they have, times innumerable, transported men into the commission against the agents of cruelty and

oppression, of the very acts of cruelty and oppression they detest and condemn,—sees all the pain, injustice, and misery, inflicted by the brutal and depraved on the good, the weak, the unresisting, and yet really cares nothing about it? Is it in harmony with, or in direct opposition to, right reason, that such monsters as those whom history consigns to the just execration of mankind should be regarded and treated by God precisely in the same light as the innocent, unoffending victims of their vice, villany, and passions? Is it within the bounds of rational probability that God should view with equal indifference the men who devote their whole lives to truth and beneficence, and the men who systematically and deliberately inflict pain and degradation on all within their influence or power? Can it be that all the Herods on one side in the world, and all the Howards on the other, are considered as one character, to be dealt with by no distinction of condemnation or approbation, of penalty or reward, in the mind, the heart, the counsels of the Almighty? If you believe this of any being, that being cannot be God; nothing is clearer: for such a being would be devoid and destitute of the first elements of rectitude. You may suppose the existence of such a being, but to propose him to us as identical with the Creator of the universe and the author of conscience is an act of Infidel delusion and insanity. God cannot be this; term the being to whom you impute such a total absence of all discrimination between right and wrong any thing you please, he is as different from God as midnight from midday, as powerlessness from omnip-

otence, as guilt from goodness. God still remains, with God you still will have to deal. He that does separate forever between the righteous and the wicked is still to be encountered. Judge yourself herein. You do not shake hands with a convict; you do not receive a burglar into your house; you do not admit an immodest woman into the society of your wife and daughters; if you do, your own heart rises in judgment against you for making in your choice no difference between vice and virtue, between the evil and the good. Will the God who created that heart, who is greater and truer than it, make no difference in His sphere, in His home, in His family, in heaven?

INF. I find great difficulty in replying. The Being that makes no distinction between good and evil men, good and evil actions, cannot be God. Any idea, therefore, of such a being has nothing to do with the true idea of God, which seems necessarily to involve and carry with it the definition of God as the very Being who has Himself originally made, and will Himself finally manifest the eternal distinction He has so made between good and evil. The execution of this distinction, as proceeding from Himself, will be *His* judgments as contradistinguished from the judgments *we* now form as to who or what are good or wicked. Then, if God judges, He must condemn; if He condemn, He must sentence; that sentence must be a punishment: there can be no punishment, unless of pain, material or spiritual; certain characters have lost all capability of spiritual pain; material pain, therefore, alone remains; con-

sequently, as they must be separated totally in place as they already are in disposition from the opposite characters, the separate place of punishment —their hell—must be a place of material torment or pain. I must concede this, or affirm that the God who implanted the sense of justice, and of the distinction between right and wrong in my nature, has no such sense, or makes no such difference Himself, which would be an inadmissible absurdity.

Chr. You grant, then, that if God be just—and you say the idea of justice cannot be separated from that of God—there must exist for a certain class of souls a material hell.

Inf. I am most loth to believe it, most reluctant to admit it.

Chr. Reluctant to admit the practical justice of God? Unless God be a mere sound, a name, and nothing else, such a hell for such souls must exist. Why, then, should you be more loth to believe in God's justice in act than in theory?

Inf. It is easily explained. Spiritual pain, by repetitions of the first act which caused it, ceases to be pain. I steal for the first time; I am miserable. I steal again; I am less sensitive, therefore less miserable. A third time; I am scarcely affected. A fourth time; I am become indifferent to conscience. A fifth time; it is clever. A sixth time; I pride myself upon it. A seventh time; I despise honesty, and match myself against the police. An eighth time; I deprave others—perverting others constitutes my greatest, if not my sole pleasure. A ninth time; I glory in the principle itself of lawless-

ness and vice. A tenth time; I am detected, tried, and hanged; but as for spiritual pain, or any hell of conscience within me, I feel no more of that than the gallows on which I am suspended. Not so with material pain; that may sometimes kill the body or wear the nerve out; but it may also, as for example, in tic-douloureux, last as long as life itself, and each attack exceed the last in acuteness and severity. Spiritual pain has thus that in its nature which soon causes it to cease to be a pain at all. I do not care, therefore, for a merely spiritual hell,—I confess it: human nature does not care for it nor fear it: why? It sees and feels by experience that it very soon ceases to be pain or hell at all. Nero wept when he signed the first death-warrant submitted to him: a few years after he gloated over daily massacres and Rome incendiarized. Compunction had ceased its action. But I do fear a material hell: so does every man. Men fear pain more than death; they will do all things, try all remedies, to rid themselves of bodily pain and torture. Now, if hell be material, and the life it affects eternal, that is a notion, I repeat, too harrowing to be entertained.

Chr. More so, do you think, than the notion that God is a Being without any sense of love to the good, or of justice to the merciless, the depraved, and the impenitent? Which is the more terrible, that the universe should be without any other God than the fiction of a name, or that the men who are the cause of nine-tenths of the misery of mankind,—men without a grain of living soul or conscience in them towards God or man,—should be made amenable

to eternal justice in the only way of which their natures are left susceptible—material pain?

Inf. Why not forgive?

Chr. God proffers unlimited forgiveness, but it must be accepted now; it must be acted upon now; it must be attended now with that effect which alone renders such forgiveness the initiatory step to salvation from such a hell, the change of such a nature from moral and spiritual death to moral and spiritual life.

Inf. But why not forgive *then?*

Chr. Forgive a nature which would ever remain the same?

Inf. No; renew it then as well as forgive.

Chr. And for its renewal in faith and works roll back the times of God to this period of probation, in which the evil itself is the probation; reverse the whole order and succession of the Divine counsels in heaven and earth! It cannot be. God Himself can do no more than He has done to save the soul of man. He Himself can do no more than He has done in the sacrifice of His Son; if that be rejected by man, eternity itself presents no further, no other, no second Sacrifice for Sin, or Saviour from hell.

Inf. If I believed a material hell as inevitably consequent on impenitent sin, or on the rejection of Christ as the Saviour-God, I would never sin, I would become a Christian. No man really and unfeignedly believing it, would ever by vice or indifference incur the risk of so awful a penalty. The fact that men do sin, do abandon themselves to secular fears and indulgences of every description, proves of itself

that they do not believe in such a future material place of pain as hell. If they did, they would not for a single day continue to lead the lives they do; that is as clear as that a man, however thirsty he might be, would never touch the cup, however tempting and sparkling it might appear, of which he knew the contents to be the beverage of poison and death.

Chr. Very true; and it is this very Infidelity, this want of faith in the expressed revelations and forewarnings of God, that makes men wicked, keeps them wicked, obdures them in their wickedness. They do not believe that God will judge the wicked; they do not believe in such a state of pain and separation for the wicked as hell; otherwise, as you state, they would no more do evil than a thirsty man would drink off an assured and immedicable poison. It is Unbelief that thus murders the souls of men, and perpetuates moral disorder in individuals, families, and nations. The Scriptures are, therefore, by your own confession, right in stating the existence of Faith in the Word of God, in a future judgment, heaven, and hell, to be that indispensable requisite which preserves the soul from vice, defilement, and shame, and establishes it in righteousness, devotion, and purity. Your Infidelity, on the contrary, by utterly ignoring and refusing to believe in the practical justice of the Almighty, positively encourages and inflames men to the perpetration of every crime, and the indulgence of every ruinous passion. It destroys the vitality of the soul, and the sensibility of the conscience; it rends up that most just, truthful, and salutary fear of a holy and sin-remembering

God, with which all human laws are superfluous, without which they are useless to deter man from the commission of turpitude, crime, and impiety.

INF. But surely this fear of hell would never of itself render a man a good, lovely, or noble character?

CHR. Who affirms it would? or who affirms that, where it does exist, it ever exists "by itself?" It is not the end, it is the beginning of the soul's wisdom; for who does not know that he who believes in a hell for the cruel, the pitiless, the exacting, the oppressive, the insensible, will fear to be cruel, pitiless, exacting, oppressive, insensible?

INF. And you advocate "fear" as a sound principle of appeal and penalty?

CHR. In its true sense there is none sounder, none more deeply implanted in man's nature, none productive of more certain results. False fears there are innumerable, as of every true sensation there are innumerable counterfeits; the world is a mass of false and contemptible fears of things that ought to be spurned, not feared, but "the fear of God" is as genuine, pure, and holy a part of man's right nature as hope, or faith, or love. He is the only legitimate object of the soul's fear; nothing is there more truly natural or more elevating than the fear of God. Something of it remains in the worst of men; how few, how very few, die that do not breathe a prayer to be at peace at least with God! You must yourself feel, that to confront God face to face in judgment is a very different thing, indeed, from arguing against Christianity, its priesthood, and its Scripture; for a

man to be about to prove in his own person, and at the cost of his own soul, whether there is a holy God and an Eternal Judgment, is a far different thing than to propose this and that imaginary objection to religion and its ways. Supposing these even to carry certain weight in theory, what becomes of them in the light of the great fact of his own impending judgment? God Himself,—a holy God,—is to be met; before Him the man by himself and upon himself stands to receive judgment. And no wise man will ever cast away the "fear" of that judgment in himself, or seek to weaken it in others.

Inf. But the fear of hell is not the fear of God.

Chr. It is part of it—a very essential part; for it is the fear of the power and just judgment of God in the punishment of sin.

Inf. But this "fear" has led at times to the most frightful and destructive superstitions.

Chr. The Christian fear of God has not only not led to a single superstition, but it expels from the soul every false, every servile, every superstitious terror whatever. But I go much further than this: the fear of God it is which in all ages, even though under superstitious forms, has made the moral and therefore also the physical strength of nations. The people who have faith in this one great truth of the future justice of God will always prove themselves of higher caste, character, and power, than the people who, possessing all the advantages of wealth, position, civilization, have fallen from faith in that truth. The soul of the people is in this last case a lie towards God, and they are sure to decay and perish

from the effects of the lie, from the corruption of their own soul. All history teaches us this lesson, that the substances of many of the great truths of Christianity have been embodied in the religions of many nations before Christ put His seal upon them as of Divine origin and sanction. The forms in which the substances were taught and accepted were often superstitious, but the substance under those forms was and remained true and Divine. In Rome, for instance, as long as the nation preserved their faith in the substantial truth of a Divine separation between the righteous and the wicked in a future world, under the superstitious forms of Elysium and Tartarus, the mischief of the superstition of the form was nothing in the balance against the good effect of the genuine faith in the substantial truths themselves. "Such superstitions," argued a certain class of infidels in the forms and substances alike, "are very well for the people;" but gradually the Infidelity extended to the people: no distinction was drawn between the variety of the form and the verity of the substance; both were equally ridiculed and disbelieved. The result was, that the Roman people, from being the highest-principled race in the world, became a populace without piety, without patriotism, without worth, without morals, fit only to be ruled by the iron despotism their own vices challenged and established. Polybius, the Greek historian, emphatically remarks, that as long as the Romans retained their superstitions, no nation rivalled them in private honor and public probity; every officer of the State might have been intrusted with

untold treasures; and he affirms this character for integrity to have been the real source of both their home strength and foreign influence. With the extinction of the Old Faith perished also the moral worth of Rome and all the confidence of foreign nations in the personal or national integrity of the Roman. With this view I fully concur. The philosophers or sciolists who spoke contemptuously of these superstitions, as if they were nothing but pure illusions, were themselves the representatives of the grossest and most dangerous ignorance,—the ignorance that neither saw, knew, nor appreciated the eternal and vital truths impressed by such forms on the hearts and souls of the people. They were themselves more shamefully shallow in error and wider from the truth than the simplest-minded Samnite farmer on the Apennine Hills. When both the good and the bad, the false and the true of the ancient religion had melted down into a Stygian Lake of black and stagnant Infidelity, Christianity cast the first rays of a new morning through the hideous mists of this foul and false philosophy. Men hailed and accepted it, because it was both salvation for society in this world and for the individual soul in the next. It restored the just fear of God, the true faith in the eternal distinction between vice and virtue and their future finalities.

Inf. It is very probable that such a conviction, being once made part of a man's nature, will preserve him from lawlessness and crime.

Chr. By removing it, what have you in the man

himself to fall back upon? In dealing with the soul and its impulses, have external physical preventatives and barriers been ever successful? Is the thief made less a thief by loading him with irons? the murderer less a murderer by chaining him to the galleys? the shameless woman less shameless by the bars and bolts of Oriental immurement? Having no principle of true fear towards God to appeal to within the man's soul, you are compelled for very safety's sake to have recourse to the police, the prison, and the scaffold.

Inf. You are certainly right, here; we must have police, prisons, and scaffolds; certain characters could never be managed without them.

Chr. They are absolutely necessary for the irreclaimably, the incorrigibly criminal; but are they effective of that moral life and conduct which the internal principle of faith and fear towards God produces, independent of all external appliances, in every individual in whom it operates? Are they not to the wicked now precisely what hell will be to them hereafter—penal, not purgatorial nor preventive? For a preventive you must look to a rectifying of the conscience itself in man; if you expect the police to do the work of the conscience, experience declares the more they are called upon the less effect do they produce; a certain proof that we are attempting to make them do a work which something else ought to do. A tenant of yours sows henbane in one of his best fields. He complains in autumn that it costs him a ruinous expenditure of

money to employ people to weed the field clean of henbane, and collect it into poisonous heaps to be destroyed;—what would you say to him?

Inf. Why did he sow henbane seed?

Chr. The henbane is Infidelity; the field is England; the farmer is the nation; the spring is youth; the autumn is manhood; the weeders are the police; the poisonous heaps are the prisons and the gallows; or rather so it would be if the principles of these infidel works were to be disseminated and drilled into the families and schools of England. In a few years she would perish in her own home by mortal infection and disease from the plants of her own sowing, growth, and gathering. Thus, whether you reason from the nature of spiritual or bodily pain, from the distinction between the probationary and penal states, or from the general laws of analogy, you find it not in your power to deny the existence of a material hell. Start and instil doubts upon it in men's minds; you cannot solve those doubts, you cannot render them certainties, still less can you liberate a single soul from hell, should it really exist as the future penal state of all that is odious and detestable in mankind. On such a subject, to be free from fear, a man must be incontestably certain as to the nonentity of such a place; you do not pretend to give him this certainty; you suggest doubts only; yet by condemning his Faith, you cause him to lead such a life as, without any doubts at all, will, if it be a reality, end in it and the sentence of condemnation which precedes it. Yet you express surprise that mankind will have nothing to do with "the intellect" of such

Infidelity as this—an Infidelity that has no guaranty to offer them for the truth of any one of its assertions, or the security of any one of its positions. To even the most unscrupulous character Infidelity must thus appear a most hazardous investment against time and eternity. On the other hand, what does it propose to the pure, the good, the compassionate, the kind-hearted, the generous, the truthful, the sufferer for the relief and happiness of others, the martyr for righteousness, principle, and truth? Where is its heaven, its immortality, its consummation of all things in the sinless kingdom and blissful vision of the unveiled Almighty? What single inducement does it hold out to eschew evil and ensue good?

Inf. Inducement! Do you then, after all, reduce Christianity to considerations of selfishness?

Chr. If by selfishness you mean intense devotion to one's individual interests, without reference to the feelings and happiness of others, it is unnecessary to say a word in defence of Christianity against so groundless an imputation. Its most malignant enemies admit it to be a religion, the first sacrifice on whose altars must be that of "self." If, on the contrary, you contend that Christianity infers consideration for our own interests, as defined and designed for us by the wisdom and goodness of our Maker, you are, in my opinion, right—it is "selfish," in the sense that faith in its revelations and obedience to its precepts are so thoroughly our interest, that they will exalt our "very selves, body and soul," to the highest acme of gloriousness and joy which created existence can attain. "Selfishness," in its ordinary

acceptation, signifies the pursuing our own interest according to our unenlightened and ignorant idea of it. Christianity implies the pursuing such according to the wisdom of God, and not our own. Selfishness sacrifices others to itself; Christianity, itself to others. The selfish man follows an interest destructive of all but his own pride, comfort, or importance; the Christian an interest conducive to, and conservative of, the welfare of each and all as well as himself.

INF. Nevertheless it is "selfishness," though in its noblest form.

CHR. You mean, I presume, that Christianity, which eradicates selfishness in every low form from the human heart, yet so terminates as eventually to realize for the believer the objects which the noblest form of selfishness—the sublimest ambition, for instance—proposes to its devotee? Granted; but to apply to it such a term as "selfishness," because it effects for every man, in God's way, all and infinitely more than selfishness effects for itself only in man's way, is, I think, a perversion of language. If a parent propose to each of his children such a line of conduct as will insure the individual and collective happiness of all, can you term those children "selfish," because they adopt and persevere in that line? He, rather, would be the selfish character who, abandoning it, and with it the interest of the family in common, sought out ways to aggrandize himself at the cost of the disunion and misery of his brothers and sisters. The former case is that of Christianity, which is no less the interest of all society than of each individual —the latter is that of the man who acknowledges

no obligation, in his own person, to observe the moral and spiritual duties God has prescribed, without exception, to the whole family of man on earth.

Inf. But it requires more faith than I can command to believe, among other things, that the blessed results which it promises goodness and virtue, will any more issue from it, than the penal results which it suspends above the heads of the criminal and impenitent. It may be true that a certain soul-repose is now gained by the Christian—but it appears quite a delusive hope to imagine that heaven, immortality, sinlessness, everlasting youth and joy can be his indefeasible inheritance hereafter.

Chr. That would, I apprehend, resolve itself into the question whether they are really promised him by the Almighty or not. If they are, there is no Infidel who would not admit the promise of God to be tantamount to certainty.

Inf. But the faith required to believe that such will be the fact is very great.

Chr. Believing that God has already given His Son to be crucified for the redemption of the soul, I consider heaven and its accompaniments not to be distinct and after-gifts, but part and elements of that gift itself. I regard the gift of heaven and immortality as bearing no more comparison in the sight of the Almighty to the gift of His own son, than, in the sight of Abraham, did the wood of the altar to the life of Isaac. However glorious that inheritance of the saints may be, it is not to be named as a proof of God's love to us with the giving of His Son to the humiliation and death of the Cross.

Were I, indeed, a Socinian—did I not believe Jesus Christ to be the eternal Son of God, the very magnitude and excess of the future reward, having no antecedent of equal greatness of love towards us in God's past dealings with our souls, might suggest feelings of incredulity in the verity of the promise. But now that the Almighty Father, who has given His Son, should in Him give us heaven also, appears to me to be a very small thing indeed to raise any difficulty of faith upon. In addition to this, the same amount of faith which was exacted of earlier believers has ceased to be exacted from me: it has become knowledge. I see so many of the august promises of old to the Church now substantiated, that faith in the accomplishment of the remainder scarcely tries my soul at all. Had I been one of the Twelve, I should, perhaps, have been staggered at the promise which affirmed that the Church of the Twelve should become the Church of all nations. I witness it so far fulfilled, that what remains of it to be realized I consider in the light of an absolute certainty. Had I travelled with them, and observed the debased moral feeling of all the nations whom they were commanded to teach and baptize, I might, perhaps, have despaired of the promise that in Christianity God would "pour forth of His Spirit on all flesh." Now that I see whole nations, once as sanguinary and savage as the brutes of the forest, reclaimed, humanized, and refined by the instruction of the Gospel and the Grace of the Holy Spirit, the demand that I should believe India, China, Africa will be no exceptions to the universality of this Divine influence, constitutes no

great exaction on my faith and reason. The faith of those men of old who, against all that their own eyes presented to them, doubted not that whatever God promised He would surely bring to pass, was more deeply drawn upon than mine, before whose senses these past promises stand forth as present incontestable facts of the social and spiritual state of the world. It is in my power, living in the nineteenth century, to sweep my arm around the whole horizon of the globe, and exclaim, with reference to the truth of the promises hereafter to be realized, "Behold! the past and the present are the evidence and the pledges of the future. He that, according to His Word, hath so far wrought, will, according to the same Word, finish his work of salvation on earth and in heaven." Thus, as generation on generation proceed, they will find less exacted of God from their faith, more from their love, until faith itself shall have ceased and been lost in witnessing the verification of the last of the promises of God; until hope dissolve in fruition, and of all the graces now required of us, Divine charity alone will be the one which Heaven itself shall cause to never fail. The Great Day of God, as it will terminate the existence of hope and faith, so will it commence that state of pure, unalloyed, and holy love, which alone is the real kingdom of Christ. The nearer we approach that manifestation of what Christianity really is—for now it is man's Christianity, as it were, not Christ's, which we witness; its struggles in flesh, not its triumphs in God and the good—the more, one after another, by this very fulfilment, the unfulfilled promises of God will

decrease in number; the less and less call shall we have on our faith, the more will God look to us to increase and sanctify ourselves in that grace of charity, which, gradually absorbing all other duties into itself, as God draws all the souls it animates nearer to Himself, will as the alone image of God survive with God Himself, the end of all means, and completion of all virtues. To him, therefore, who duly considers how mightily and effectually the power of God has in all cases hitherto realized His word, His future promises of heaven and immortality present no difficulty of faith. I will tell you who, to my mind, requires far greater faith than the Christian does.

INF. Who?

CHR. The unchristian, worldly Infidel. The Christian believes in the certainty of the future happiness promised him by the Almighty. No experience gainsays this belief—the rest and ease of soul produced by it attests its truth: all analogy, and the fulfilment of many as wonderful, and at the time as incredible promises, so far confirm it as to give it in some respects the character of perfect knowledge. He has reason, therefore, of the most solid description for such faith, and for the course of life which proceeds upon it. But will you inform me of the nature and vastness of the faith which is exercised by the man that, after the experience of so many thousand years to the contrary, still believes and acts on the belief that the happiness of the soul is to be found in something apart from God? Every age has tried the experiment: every age pronounced

and held it up to warning, as a desperate failure. He has only to examine his own circle to be convinced that, unless a man possesses something under him more stable than himself or any temporal source of power, it is not in the nature of things that he can be happy or at rest in soul. Nevertheless, so unbounded is such a one's faith in his own conceit, in the capability of fortune to bestow all that his heart desires, that he ventures health, conscience, life itself, on the pursuit. I affirm this to be a wilder and more insane faith than any you can impute to the most illiterate fanatic in Christianity; for it is in defiance of all past and present experience, of all the deductions of common-sense, of all the avowals and declarations of the wisest and most practical men, and—if God ever spoke to man—against the explicit word and admonition of his Creator. The faith of the Christian in God's promises is, to my mind, wisdom, reason, experience, sense, love, nobility, compared to what this worldling promises himself on the principle of Infidelity in God. This man succeeds in his pursuit: nothing is more common than for God to give a man his heart's desire, not to withhold from him the legitimate material result of his toil and energies: if he seeks riches, to let him gain them; if station, to master it; if pleasure, to command it. But then, the misery of the success! the deception to his soul which his whole life is now detected to have been! the black vacuum which makes the fretful, dissatisfied, morose old man even more wretched over his success, than have previously all the preyings of mind and trepidations

of alarm by which he has ceaselessly been tormented during the fifty years of its weary chase! From the vulgar mania of this man's credulity my reason and my soul alike recoil. Christianity appears to me to speak with the voice of pure reason, as well as with the witnessing of the issues of all such pursuits as these, when it would persuade us to lay the foundation of all our actions in God and His truthfulness. Infidelity jars upon every nerve of sense within me when it advises—"Have faith in every thing but God; believe in any thing but the Word of God; believe that money, advancement, opinion, worldly success can make you happy; but do not believe that heaven and its success, the advancement of your best self, the soul, the fruition of its better joys, the praise of God and angels can possess that power." Infidelity here exhausts and bankrupts the patience of reason. I desire to know if faith in any power created of God—mind, man, myself, means—be reasonable, is not faith in God Himself more reasonable? If I transfer to any of them the faith which nothing but Omnipotence can verify, I have surely so far lost the correct sense of things, and the guidance of right reason. Let a man so far prize fortune as it really conduces to his independence of mind, his health, his comforts, his just position, his freedom from the trammels of servility, or excessive and wasting labor. Is there any necessity to carry this appreciation into idolatry? Are there not countless instances daily recurring, in which the incapacity of fortune to touch the soul are as evident to the child as to the philosopher? There are necessities in the soul of Crœsus

the wealth and bullion of Crœsus cannot supply. And if the soul be hollow, the whole man above the animal still remains a want, a pauperism, and a craving. The higher we ascend in the scale of creation, the weaker become in us those feelings and propensities that receive gratification from the pleasures procurable by mere riches. Of all the joys in heaven, not one is attainable by the possession of wealth: of all the true, hearty, genuine joys on earth, how few are there that mere money can originate or command—how many are there which it positively vitiates and destroys! In the costly board, the massive plate, the Sybaritic viands, the correct establishment, the imposing ostentation and display of rank, we see the extent of what opulence can effect for corporeal and social gratification. He that has not all this, believes that if he had he would be happy. Are they that have it, indebted to it for happiness? If it be hereditary, if it be what they are accustomed to from their infancy, they are as profoundly indifferent to it as the farmer is to his parlor, or the laborer to his kitchen. They are panting for something else. Opulence and its advantages, great and envied as they may be, fail to content "the spirit that is in man:" it would be as much to the purpose to expect it to be satisfied with carrion as with gold. Now does Infidelity deem it "intellect" to tell us that this interior spiritual world does not exist, or that, if it does, there are no objects designed to be its respondents? With more reason might it aver that God having created in me an eye, He has created nothing to be seen;

an ear, yet nothing to be heard; hands, yet nothing to be felt; a mind, yet nothing to be learnt; than that He has created an immortal soul, yet nothing to answer and satisfy the immortal needs and action of that soul.

INF. This illustration you derive from the analogy of Nature, or perhaps the economy of supply and demand in commerce.

CHR. It may exist there, but I derive it from another source—from the Great Teacher of the Soul. "Who is there among you that, if his child ask him for bread, he will give him a stone; or if he ask a fish, will he give him a scorpion?" The soul does ask God its Father for the bread of the soul—for that which will sustain and satisfy, not that which, like the scorpion, will sting, inflame, exasperate, and poison, with the torture of a hellish thirst, its immortal longings. God gives his child, the soul, that which it does in all its inexpressible aspirations and emotions pray Him to give: He gives it Christ and heaven. But what has Infidelity to proffer it—be it the soul of a heathen or Christian—when it thus, after the first libation, spurns the contentments of the sensual life, and cries to its Creator for pleasures of like nature with itself—spiritual, eternal, incorruptible?

INF. Nothing. How, not admitting such immortality, could it have? It would be a contradiction.

CHR. As it is, it is a flagrant contradiction. In this present existence we have these yearnings and passions of the soul in full activity: we request from Infidelity an explanation of them. The meanest

creature in whom God has implanted an appetite, finds wherewith to meet and satisfy it: in Scriptural language, "God feeds the very sparrows:" it is that satisfaction which constitutes such happiness as theirs is: but, say you, for the Soul, the dove of eternity, there is no food prepared of God to meet those appetites which will not and cannot feed on the carnal, the mundane, the sensual. Right reason, I submit, must reject the supposition that God should so provide for the necessities of the fowl of the air and the worm of the earth, yet leave wholly uncared for the necessities of the noblest part in His noblest work. That the soul is not content with what contents the body, is a matter of universal experience and confession: we do not learn that from Christianity; but we do learn from Christianity that God has made special provision, and what that provision is, for its special and paramount needs both in time and eternity. What a singular grievance, in truth, his own soul must often be to an Infidel! What a cause of the most perplexing contradictions between himself and his creed! What a protest in every form of tacit rebellion and passive resistance against being subordinated to its own subjects and implements—the perishing organs of the body and their more perishing pleasures! What irrepressible abhorrences of the swine-husks the Infidel intellect presents to it for food! What strugglings to be liberated from its foul companions, and to return, though naked and in tears, to its own home—"Let me arise hence, and go to my Father!"

INF. Granting that there is a proper fruition prepared for the soul, a point yet remains to be cleared

up to my apprehension. How is it that any man who has not utterly extirpated every slightest penchant for every slightest sin, can be an inheritor of that kingdom of pure and perfect righteousness? Now no man dies without some tinct of sin. If all tinct of sin be not purged away in this life, you Protestants hold it cannot be forgiven in the life to come.

Chr. I am no further Protestant than the Church of England is: I can only answer you, therefore, as an Anglo-Catholic: other Protestants can answer for themselves.

Inf. Does not the Anglo-Catholic Church hold the view I have stated?

Chr. I am not aware it does to the extent you assume. There is a certain sin, saith our Lord, which shall not be forgiven, either in this world, nor in the world to come—implying that certain sins are forgiven in the world to come—such may be those of which good Christians, suddenly cut off, may not have had time to bethink themselves, to confess to God, and to implore remission for. We may believe this, yet consistently repudiate purgatory, or the notion that such purification can only take place through the agency of penal fire.

Inf. Nevertheless, whatever tinct of sin or immorality remains unforgiven on earth must be cleansed before such a man inherits the Kingdom—if not here, then by an act of Christ in the next world.

Chr. Yes.

Inf. If this solution protects you in one quarter, it exposes you to greater peril from another.

How is it that sin does not forever exclude from Heaven?

CHR. It does.

INF. Forever?

CHR. Forever.

INF. Surely not. No soul is there of the race of Adam in heaven which was not once sullied with sin: many, like David, deeply sullied. Yet they are in heaven. Sin, therefore, does not forever exclude from heaven.

CHR. Is the stain of sin on them now?

INF. No.

CHR. If such stain were on them could they be in heaven?

INF. I conclude not—that is, according to your faith, which declares that nothing but the perfectly pure and holy can exist in heaven.

CHR. And such are they. The blood of Christ has not only obliterated the stain, but destroyed in them the existence of the thing which imparted the stain. Except for this blood, sin, both in its stain and power —and of that power expulsion from heaven is part— would have remained in them. Regarded by itself sin does forever exclude from heaven. But where Christ is, sin ceases to exist. David, and every saint in Rest were once sinners, therefore in themselves forever excluded. Now they are so washed in the laver of a new birth and creation in Christ, that sin has ceased to either attach or inhere into their soul. For the same reason no soul of man, which is not thus washed and cleansed in the blood of Christ, can enter heaven: sin remains in it, and that will, of

itself, forever exclude it, without the necessity of any further act of judgment on God's part—or, as St. John expresses it, "He that receives not Christ, is condemned already."

Inf. I so expected—and thus come to my concluding objection to your religion, which is, that your faith, by making heaven dependent wholly on Jesus Christ, and not on morality, undermines the value and obligations of morality.

Chr. The answer to such a speculative objection as this, must be made by matters of fact. Does Christianity moralize or demoralize men—individually and socially—does it demoralize England? Is the immorality in any country attributable to the precepts and faith of Jesus Christ?

Inf. I cannot be so hardy as to answer in the affirmative. But it is for this reason the more extraordinary that it does not make heaven the recompense of the morality it forms in men, instead of being a gift of mercy from God in Christ His Son. How do you explain such an anomaly?

Chr. Is it an anomaly?

Inf. Surely. Christianity builds up a moral system in man for the kingdom of heaven—yet it asserts this morality constitutes not the remotest claim to this kingdom, which is solely a gift and not a wage from God. Would it not much more strengthen and exalt morality, to make heaven its wages, and not—irrespectively at times of all morality, such as in the instance of the Robber on the cross—a grace in Christ?

Chr. You deem it more reasonable that heaven

should be a premium awarded by the Almighty to a moral life on earth, than part only of God's gift to us, in Christ, His Son?

INF. Yes.

CHR. By a moral life you mean the observance of the moral law—much what Scripture means by keeping the whole law of God!

INF. Exactly.

CHR. Nothing then prevents you from challenging heaven in your own right as a perfect moral character.

INF. Yes, Christianity prevents.

CHR. You greatly err. So far from preventing you, it declares that if you can truly challenge heaven on the ground of moral rectitude, you will, according to the infallible promise of God, receive it as your own right. He that doeth, shall live. "What shall I do to inherit eternal life? Keep the commandments." That, the original promise, does and will forever hold good to every soul of man. Every soul which has kept the Law of God may claim the promise of heaven from God by the title of its own individual obedience. If you have kept it, well and good: you will as surely receive heaven in your own right, according to God's promise, as the Christian will in Christ's right, according to God's promise. The question here again resolves into a matter of fact. Have you kept the whole law or not?

INF. The *whole* law who could keep?

CHR. Infraction of the law in one point is an infraction of the whole as law. A murderer may keep the law of England in all points but that which pro-

hibits murder: infringing it in that one point, he incurs the full penalty of the law in its integrity as a law-breaker. Similarly the observation of nine commandments extends no immunity to the violation of the tenth: he that is guilty of one incurs the guilt attached to the failure of legal obedience. Whether you or any other individual are thus guilty or not, is, I repeat, a question of evidence and facts. Christianity first declares that if your legal obedience is inviolate, heaven is yours in your own right. If it has been violated, then, on your own grounds, any claim you may have of your own to heaven is forfeited; you are disenfranchised and disinherited of all right or title to heaven. Is not that clear?

Inf. Certainly: if I desert service, or as it were abandon my work, the engagement is on my part violated, the stipulations annulled, and the wages forfeited.

Chr. Secondly, it affirms that by reason of a certain flaw in your nature, occasioned by the very act of desertion, it is impossible you can now, however sincerely or assiduously you exert yourself, fulfil the original compact of that obedience through the love due from the soul to its Creator. However far your obedience may extend, the obedience itself is radically defective by the absence from it as its right root and cause of this spiritual love to God. The rich young man instanced in the Gospel illustrates my meaning. "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" "Keep the commandments." "All have I kept from my youth upward." "One thing thou lackest, follow me." No —he would not; the soul-love to God, to Christ as

our God, and the following Him from that soul-love alone, was that lacking in him and in us, which vitiates even whatever obedience we do by nature attain to. But so far from Christianity preventing you from any attempt at this perfect obedience, it implores you to try it. "Be perfect as your Father in heaven." Knowing full well that the more unfeignedly you do try, the more heartfelt will be your confession that you cannot, by your own power, act up to even the requisitions of your own conscience, much less of the holy law of God. If heaven is to be yours, it must be by some other title than such as is grounded on your moral merit, or legal obedience. Is there any Priestcraft in such plain dealing as this? If you have kept the law, you are secure of heaven in your own right; for the promise of God has gone forth upon such obedience to Adam, to you, to every soul of the race of Probation. If you have never fallen from God's law, you have no need of a Saviour. Christianity is not commissioned, nor did Christ come to such, for so He expressly states. "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance: I am not sent except to the lost." "Christ came into the world to save sinners." This is one of the fundamental principles of the Gospel, and pervades its whole delivery to man.

Inf. Very true; but this very Gospel, in laying down such a principle, terrifies, instead of, as it might be imagined, soothing me.

Chr. How?

Inf. It compels an appeal to my own conscience; it holds up before that conscience the mirror of the

Gospel-law of God; it drags me to its bar; it contrasts my obedience with its requisitions; it will not permit me to compare myself, my actions, my life, with any other code, or to judge by any other standard than that of God.

Chr. But what in all this should terrify or alarm you, if, as you say, your conscience is clear?

"Hic murus aheneus esto,
Nil conscire sibi, nullâ pallescere culpâ."

It is the very process which a conscience clear of all self-accusations would court and challenge, the very process it must go through at the bar of heaven, if not on earth, before it can establish the validity of its claim to heaven. If *you* need no Saviour, what should alarm you in the fact of His coming to others who do need Him? If you are sound, why should you be troubled when the physician passes you to visit the sick?

Inf. But the act of forcing my conscience to come to a judgment according to the spiritual law of God, not by any inferior criterion, is of itself sufficient to create feelings of misgiving and distrust in one's own state.

Chr. Would you judge the soul by any other law than the law of the soul? Would you judge a man by the law of the wild beast, or the mind by the law of a mineral?

Inf. Of course not: the soul must be judged by the law of its own nature; that I admit.

Chr. The Gospel presents the soul that law, and entreats it to judge of itself by it. What should there be more alarming in such an act to a guiltless

and unfallen soul, than in my presenting the statutes against treason to a thoroughly loyal subject? Ought not the soul which has kept the law to rejoice at receiving it, for is it not, in fact, the very title in right of which it claims the tenure and reversion of heaven?

INF. No; for as there is not a living soul that on examining the law can conscientiously say it has in all points observed either the letter or spirit of its enactments, the conscience becomes alarmed.

CHR. Truly so: the cause of the terror then is the conscience, not the Gospel. Ought not Christianity in justice, to say nothing of mercy, to lay before the eye of your soul the copy of that original law by obedience to which you yourself claim heaven? How, unless it does, can your conscience know whether you have obeyed or not, whether it is to accuse or excuse you, whether you need a Saviour or not? You would, I conceive, express indignation if it did not as the first step beseech you to consider by the light of this law whether the obedience on which you rely is solid and faultless or not. If it be, the promise of God stands irrevocable to you in your own person. If not, the law and your own conscience condemn you, not Christianity. Being conscience-condemned by your own test, Christianity then comes to you as "glad tidings." But she does not judge: that is not her province, nor the province of Christ now. He is now the Saviour and the Comforter, not the Judge—hereafter he will be the judge. Now it is the law and the conscience which judge; much more, until these two have both judged and

condemned the man, the man cannot come to Christ at all, nor is he at all received by Christ. Christ explicitly states, "Unless you are lost, you do not need Me; you are secure of immortality and heaven by the promise of God to obedience. That word in heaven stands fast for ever and ever. But if you are law-condemned, self-condemned; if your heart and conscience confirm the justice of that condemnation, and you know not where to fly for refuge or seek for comfort, come to Me: I am your Saviour and your God, and will give rest and peace to your soul." To suppose that Christ and His Gospel came to accuse, condemn, and judge, is a complete subversion and misunderstanding of the whole purport of His Divine mission. He most emphatically abjured all jurisdiction whatever in this sense, as being utterly the reverse of His purposes in coming in an Incarnate state from heaven to man: "Woman! hath no man condemned thee? No man, Lord. Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more." He left judgment to the law of God, which had from the first been given to man; so far from interfering with its power and prerogatives, He constantly declared it must to its least particle be obeyed, and would, to its smallest tittle, be fulfilled; He magnified it by bowing His own neck to its stroke, and yielding up His own soul to its justice.

INF. But if no man can keep the law, to what end was it given?

CHR. The man Christ Jesus has kept it; kept it as man, and, therefore, He in His own right claims and possesses heaven; in Him, as the sinless man,

God has verified His promise to obedience; over Him, because He was sinless, death lost all power in the grave. Could we, like Christ, keep the law, like Christ we should in our own right ascend to the land of everlasting life. But He is the only one who has done so. Fulfilling the perfect will and law of God, He attained the promise for himself as the man Christ Jesus; then, having so attained, He laid down that sinless life for us, that, as the second Adam, He might be to us the beginning of that life eternal due to obedience, as the first Adam had been of the death due to disobedience.

Inf. But, as you say no other man has ever fulfilled the Law, of what practical use, therefore, was it to reveal it to mankind, seeing they were in a state incapable of paying obedience to it?

Chr. That very incapability was the demonstration of their state. The consciousness of such state produced by comparing their life with the righteousness which the law exacted, formed that preliminary conviction which St. Paul calls "the conviction of the law." It constituted, therefore, the revelation of a man's nature to himself: it brought home to every one individually the fact of the Fall in his own person. The more strenuously a man attempted to obey its requisitions, the more profoundly would the inevitable failure impress him with the necessity of looking elsewhere than to himself for the restoration of this nature and its redemptibility for the inheritance promised to obedience. Its end, therefore, in this respect, was to bring a man through his own conscience to Christ.

Inf. Your religion, of course, calculated upon this result. No conscience pretends to be altogether free from the sense of some violation or other of the moral and spiritual law; no man's conscience, therefore, would permit him to advance a claim to heaven on the ground of moral perfection.

Chr. How, moreover, can moral excellency be more highly honored than by Christianity addressing itself thus to the most moral of men? "High as you deem your moral worth to be, it can make no pretension to have attained the standard of heavenly righteousness. Exalted as it may be in your own opinion, it is a very low kind indeed of holiness compared with that true loveliness of the soul which alone qualifies for the presence and society of God." The absolute rejection by Christianity of the most advanced phase of human morality as unworthy the name of righteousness in the judgment of God, conveys to my mind the strongest and most elevated idea of what the righteousness of the soul and the purity of heaven really are. Except for this revelation to us of the Divine standard, every little society and clique, every individual might debase morality and moral worth down to the practices, conventionalism, or usages of himself and his interests. The fact that in the heathen world this was the result, is apparent from the very words "morals, morality," meaning to them nothing more than the habits or the prevalent manners of this or that individual family or people. The man who would claim heaven as being fit on the score of his own excellence to live forever with God and the Angels,

appears to us Christians to entertain very extraordinary ideas of the holiness of heaven, and to labor under a total misconception of wherein the real value of all morality consists.

INF. In what does it consist except in its being conducive to a man's own good?

CHR. Take the most moral of men, one guilty of the fewest immoral thoughts and actions, one that rests all his religion and respectability on his morality; what, I beg, of all his morality would be left possible for him in heaven? Nothing of that which we call morality can have existence there. The notion of present moral excellences being either excellences or existences in heaven, carries on the face of it the assumption of absurdity. How can such virtues as chastity, temperance, sobriety, honesty, almsgiving, respect for social decorum—all that circle of qualities which in this corporeal life constitute what we now mean by morality—have place or being in the spiritual natures and the Christ-pervaded realm where God is all in all? The morality of the present existence, on which you would thus found religion, perishes with the present system of things. It dies with our dust at the very moment Christianity ascends in life and immortality to a state too high, and a development too glorious to admit the possibility of such moralities among its conditions.

INF. In what, then, does the worth of morality consist? So far from gaining heaven, it cannot even, it seems, rise above the earth. Dissolving with our dissolution, to connect its subject-matter with aught in heaven is evidently ridiculous.

Chr. The real value of the moral law consists in its having been made by God the test to the soul of its love to Him. "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, with all thy mind: this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like to it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." The observance of the moral law, unless it originates, proceeds, and ends in this love of the soul to God, unless its love to God be the cause and motive of its morality, however serviceable to ourselves and society in its present state, is utterly valueless to the soul in a future state.

Inf. You raise the question above my immediate field of view.

Chr. Is it not reasonable to presume that God, in selecting the test of our individual love to Him, should select one, the observance of which would, at the same time, be an inestimable blessing and advantage to mankind at large?

Inf. Very reasonable.

Chr. But it is very possible that a man may observe this test without the slightest care or reference to the original object of its institution simply for the sake of its indirect and collateral advantages. A man may thus be thoroughly moral, and yet also thoroughly destitute of even a spark of devotion or affection to God.

Inf. A common, a very common case.

Chr. There may exist, therefore, the greatest mo-

rality without the least religion. Such a person being moral for his own purposes, not from a spirit of love and attachment to his Creator, cannot be adjudged to fulfil the proper end of morality. He uses it as an expedient of mere worldly selfishness. God is thrown aside, himself and his family alone considered. With his death the advantages of such observance cease and determine. Having never connected morality with God in any sense, it is to his soul worth nothing, and its benefits as mere morality die with him.

Inf. Then a thoroughly moral man in this sense has no more prospect of heaven than an immoral man, supposing both to be equally destitute of any higher principle than nature or morality.

Chr. It is so. But on the other hand, if a man observe the moral law in evidence of his love to Him who has given it as the test of such love, the blessings of such obedience in Christ are eternal. The moral law itself and its temporal benefits, as in the contrary case, die with him in the grave; but the Religion of that law—the love of God in the soul—ascends and lives and receives its full fruition in heaven in the union of the soul with the God of its love. Morality is thus in itself transient; religion imperishable. It is the Love of God which alone constitutes true religion, and it is religion which alone communicates to morality its own imperishable value.

We have now, I believe, examined the catalogue of your objections against Christianity in order and succession. Before we break up our conference, permit me in my turn to suggest a few very practical

objections against Infidelity. Will you engage to teach and rule your family for six months on infidel principles? Will you call in your wife, your sons, daughters, and servants, and inculcate upon them, as solid truth and sound philosophy, the principles advocated by these infidel authors, Newman and others: "That there is no God, no Christ, no Holy Spirit, no heaven, no hell, no future judgment; that the Bible is a myth, the Gospels a forgery, the Apostles impostors, Christianity priestcraft, the Sacraments magical delusions; that God has never spoken to man, nor cares what any man thinks, says, or does; that vice and virtue, good and evil, are equally indifferent to Him, and that He neither has now, nor ever will He make any distinction between them?" Will you undertake to teach them this?

INF. Clearly it would never do.

CHR. It ought to do if Infidelity be true. You just now affirmed that Infidelity was freedom, and Religion slavery. Release your family and establishment from the "slavery" of Religion, and initiate them into the "freedom" of Infidelity. Why should you alone be "free?" You eulogize Infidelity in theory, why do you shrink from putting it into practice?

INF. I should regret for many reasons disturbing the religious convictions of my family, especially of the female branches of it; for I admit Christianity to be the support and elevating power of womanhood.

CHR. That is, for half the world; the half that

form, mould, and refine the other and coarser half; —a large admission. Try the experiment, then, on your valet. Train him carefully in the Infidel catechism. Tell him in plain English style what these authors tell you in the obscure German style; instruct him that all he has ever hitherto heard and believed in the Bible or the Church, is an imposition on his credulity; that there never was any commandment against lying, theft, or murder; that such as pass for the commandments were invented seven or eight hundred years after Moses, if there ever was such a man, died; and especially, that Jesus Christ was what Newman delineates Him. You talk much about the "sincerity" of Christians; here is a test for the sincerity of Infidels in Infidelity,—one easily tried within your own home. Will you venture it?

INF. No.

CHR. Decidedly your "no" is very emphatic. I am requesting nothing out of the way, only that you will teach your servant the principles of Infidelity in the same manner that Christian families teach their servants the principles of Christianity; that you would, for instance, instead of the Scriptures, read Strauss, Foxton, Paine, or Voltaire to them. And this, if you are sincere and consistent, you ought to do. If you feel Infidelity to be a blessing, impart it to them, and, above all, see they practise it. Take your theory out of the stable and put it into harness. After your valet has thoroughly comprehended that there is no Divine prohibition against robbery and

assassination, show him the contents of your bureau, then go, yourself, to sleep, and let the instruction work.

INF. You put an extreme case.

CHR. Extreme! I am putting the most common, the most domestic case I can suggest—master and servant—a case for every home and establishment in the kingdom. On Infidel principles, why should not your valet practise upon you your own teaching? On the principles which reject a future life and inevitable judgment as priestcraft and delusion, what should prevent him from rifling your bureau and stabbing you in your slumbers to the heart?

INF. The chance, or rather certainty, of being detected and hanged.

CHR. What is the daily pay of a private soldier?

INF. A shilling a day.

CHR. The sum for which your valet risks his life is perhaps a thousand pounds. Now, so far as mere death is concerned, which, according to Infidelity, is the end-all, what reason can you assign why your valet is not more justified in chancing his life for a thousand pounds than the soldier is for a shilling? By his master's principles nothing but annihilation and insensibility follow death; the soldier risks that death for a shilling; the valet for twenty thousand shillings. If the soldier escapes being shot, he gets but the one; if the valet escapes being hanged, he gets the twenty thousand. If it comes to the worst with both, the soldier dies for the shilling, the valet for the thousand pounds. On Infidel principles the infamous murderer is thus, whether he

escape or hang, a wiser calculator than the gallant soldier.

Inf. Christianity itself cannot always prevent such murders.

Chr. Infidelity produces them. On the principles of Infidelity they are not "murders," they are speculations in which a man stakes his life for so much money against the police and the law. Except for Christianity, where now we have one, we should have a hundred such instances. But Infidelity, by and out of its own principles, as naturally generates crime as the root of the deadly nightshade does the poisonous berries of the plant. An intellectual Infidel is certain to be guilty of intellectual crime, and almost certain to be guilty of moral crime, for his Intellect will reason out Infidelity into act. If you escaped from such an attempt on your life as I have supposed, your Infidelity incapacitates you from putting any further question to your servant than this, "Had you no fear of the gallows?" He replies, "None; why should I have? what is the gallows but death? what is death but extinction and insensibility? This is the only world; why should not I as well as yourself make the most of it? Why should you be the master and I the servant, except because you have money! To be my own master, to make the most of this the only life, I must have money; I tried for yours." "And you will be executed for it." "What of that, sir? I shall feel nothing after it; I should have been weak to have thrown my life away, like the rank and file of the army, for a shilling; but a thousand pounds and a run to America were worth

the risk; and if I escape, as I still may, I may venture it again rather than be a drudge for life." This would be coarse, vulgar reasoning, but on your Infidel premises quite unanswerable. This is your domestic "hero."

INF. You are assuming for granted that Christianity would deter such a character from crime.

CHR. What makes him such a character at all, but the total absence of Christian faith? You confess that despite every defence you can erect against the positive revelations of a future state in the Scriptures and teaching of Christ, that teaching penetrates into and often agitates your heart. The mass of mankind —such as your servant is—do not irritate and weary themselves with petty distinctions or petty objections in religion: they proceed upon its broad, massive, prominent truths; against them they never think of fabricating barriers for themselves of verbal wind and metaphysical obscurities. From their infancy they are taught and believe "it is appointed unto man once to die, and after death the judgment." And such faith does, as a matter of fact, prevent the intrusion of even criminal ideas and intentions into their minds, which now, by a life-long habit of Faith, rest as naturally for support upon the Scriptures as their feet do on the solid earth.

Again, let us extend the experiment. Infidels are singular in this respect: they compose and publish a long treatise in favor of Infidelity; they present it to the nation: a plain, practical man takes it up and asks, "Has Mr. Newman or Mr. Hennell ever tried to work out this Infidel theory of his

in practice? Merchants, agriculturists, manufacturers, in introducing a new scheme or mode of operations in their respective provinces, refer to their own experience of its working, in order to recommend it to the public judgment and adoption. Has Mr. Newman ever 'farmed' or worked a parish on the principles he here lays down—that the Scriptures are false, and Jesus Christ a myth or an impostor? If not, what does the man mean by publishing stuff on paper which will not stand a day's trial of real work? If he has, why does he not supply us with the result?"

INF. You would not expect them to answer that challenge.

CHR. Is it not a challenge Christianity daily not only submits to, but what she incessantly entreats the world to give her, that she may accept it? Is not every parish such a challenge, such an acceptance? Infidelity, in its self-complacency, sits down in a closet, imagining it the easiest thing to devise a quasi-religion, which can face the rough attritions and unceremonious probations of the world. "Preach the Gospel to every creature." How easy that sounds! but immediately it attempts to substitute something else than the Gospel to be so preached, it discovers itself in a dead-lock. It casts its eye on every human work of wisdom, science, philosophy, but, somehow or other, none of these can stand being preached upon, preached against, analyzed, torn into fragments, day after day, century after century, to Jew, Greek, Roman, Celt, Briton, German, Hindoo, Negro, Indian, every phase of mind and civilization, yet remain as fresh, as vital, as keen and powerful

a two-edged sword to the spirit of man, as it was when its first accents from the Temple Porch wrung forth the cry for salvation. "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Compare the number of pulpits in the world, among high and low, rich and poor, the taught and untaught, the town and country, the refined and the barbarous, with the number of universities, colleges, academies of arts and sciences; the disproportion will give us some conception of the Gospel as that only thing of Light which "can be preached to every creature." Nothing else can be: substitute what you will, instead of proving as the Gospel, the fire of God to the altar-fuel of the universal soul of man, it will drop as destructively as poison on the tongue, or as ineffectively as water on the rock. I should wish, therefore, to know what Infidelity intends to preach from every parish pulpit instead of the Gospel: what it intends to visit with into every house: what to teach with to every child: what to comfort with to every sick and dying bed: what to rebuke with to every shameless and dangerous character: what to convert with to every penitent? At a death-bed, for instance, what has it to say or impart of hope, consolation, or strengthening to the soul?

INF. That would not be the place for it to speak.

CHR. Something must and will speak there to the soul. Why does Infidelity muffle its face up? why does its tongue cleave to the roof of its mouth? why is it a voiceless and fearful conscience when the Angel of Christianity is pouring forth the rich treasures of eternal truth, bringing down its God to the soul, opening the gates of heaven, changing the

grave to victory and the sting of death into the sceptre of immortality? All this, again, is practical —occurs in Great Britain alone a thousand times every day, for such is the average of deaths per day in our island—and at every death either Christianity or Infidelity must minister. Now why does not the intellectual infidel form as it were a parish, preach Infidelity from the pulpit, and carry Infidelity to the cradles, the hearth-stones, and bed-sides of every family in the parish? Why is he afraid to reduce to practice what he is not afraid to publish? The real reason is, he is perfectly conscious that, if he did so successfully, that parish would, in twelve months' time, be a local hell. His own life would not be worth a week's purchase. Yet you tell us of the "Intellect of Infidelity"—the intellect that cannot govern a parish of five hundred souls, except to dissolve, ruin, and literally damn every thing it acts successfully upon—be it the servant, the master, the family, or the society—an "Intellect" that cannot stand up in a pulpit, or communicate a word of solace when solace is most needed and most precious! an Intellect that cannot find one champion in all its ranks to do that on its own principles—instruct, elevate, and govern a certain society of souls—which thousands of Christian curates of ordinary abilities do on Christian principles, for innumerable parishes in every part of the globe! Whence is this difference? If in the "Intellect," or power of government, what a despicable thing Infidel intellect must be! If in Infidelity itself, what a despicable thing Infidelity must be!

INF. There appears to me great weight due to this part of your argument.

CHR. You will, perhaps, as a rich man, having some stake in the preservation of law and property in the country, see still greater weight in the third and final application of it. Let us extend Infidelity beyond the family and the parish to the whole mass of society—to the people. You are rich: the great majority of the people are poor—so poor that hard and continuous labor barely enables them to procure the necessaries of subsistence. Supposing them to be Infidels as well as yourself, why should not the valet's reasoning with reference to your bureau be as validly applied by them to the whole of your property? Why should they not seize your land and fortune, and enjoy them themselves?

INF. My answer is the same—the law would proceed against them.

CHR. Such as the answer is, it will not hold here. An individual is not, but a people are, the law: an Infidel people, Infidel law. Why should the law proceed against them?

INF. Because, in brief, it is the law.

CHR. And if the law were altered, so as to legitimize the robbery of the rich, to declare it no crime at all, but rather a restitution of property to the right original owners, the men of labor, the people, what then?

INF. The law reversed!

CHR. The Social maxim of Infidelity in France was, "All property is robbery." During the first revolution, in the reign of infidel reason or intellect,

which was also the Reign of Terror, that maxim became the law and practice of the State. Within the last six years it has again been attempted to make it the law of the State, and such attempt was only crushed by deluging the streets of Paris with blood. Am I not correct? Are not the facts I state perfectly undeniable? Infidelity in religion is, in this age, Red Republicanism or Communism in politics, and its fundamental principle is, "All property, all capital is robbery: its recovery and distribution among the people is not robbery, but right and just restitution.

Inf. Your facts are correct; proceed.

Chr. The Socialists have proved themselves very hard, straightforward, matter-of-fact men in carrying out those principles, have they not? So much so, that they left France no alternative between Red Republicanism and Absolute Despotism. France chose the latter, she was reduced to that choice by Infidelity. We are speaking of things before our eyes on the other side of the Channel.

Inf. But we have comparatively few Socialists in England.

Chr. Just as many as we have Infidels, neither more nor less. And it is to this point I specially request your attention. If Infidelity is right, the Red Socialist is right: if his premises are true, his inferences are correct. They, like you, are Infidels: they have no "weaknesses," no "fear" of God; they do not believe in such "absurdities" as the future judgment and everlasting life. They hold this life to be the only one, the only chance of enjoyment: they

utterly deny all responsibility of the soul to God, or any further existence than the present. Now answer the Red Republican or the Chartist on the common principles you both hold of Infidelity. Why, this world being the only one, this life the only life, there being no God, or one to whom vice and virtue are equally indifferent, should you be permitted to retain and enjoy your five thousand per annum, to revel in every luxury, and to gratify every indulgence, while they—who are a hundred to one in numbers against you—should still continue to toil and slave, to hunger and thirst, to see their wives and children shivering with cold and penury on less, perhaps, than twenty pounds per annum? Why should all the labor and misery be theirs, all the ease, profit, and pleasure yours? Why should this confessedly frightful disparity be submitted to? Now these men have numbers on their side against the rich: they are their equals in bodily, and perhaps in mental strength. They come to you, not speaking of God in any way: nor do you. It is about to be simply a struggle between two men, both of them without God in this world or faith in the next. They demand a redistribution of your property among them. How would you answer them?

Inf. I would pistol them as I would a wild beast.

Chr. Exactly; and they you. This is "the free, happy, independent life" you would soon realize, were all your fellow-citizens in England Infidels like yourself. It is evident, on Infidel principles, the rich Infidel is at the mercy of the poor one; the question between them can only be decided as it has been

in France—by physical force; and the contest between them would be chronical; it would be periodically revived as long as both acknowledged no other maxims than those of Infidelity. Observe, therefore, if Infidelity be right, the poor Infidel, the man of labor, the man of physical power, is logically justified in becoming a communist and applying to your property, to all property, the principles of communism. For if this life be the only life, and God cares nothing for human actions, it would argue sheer imbecility on the part of the infidel communist to permit any one man to monopolize his 100,000*l.* per annum while 100,000 better, stronger, more resolute men were, by mere legalities, changeable at any time by getting the Legislature into their own hands, proscribed to lives of ceaseless work and thankless indigence. You, as a man of wealth and position, enjoy the full advantages of the sanctity with which Christianity in this country invests life and property: but—pardon me for saying so—you not only shirk all acknowledgments of your heavy debt to it, but you advocate yourself and encourage in others, principles, the application of which by the masses of society—the poor at your own door—to yourself, would, in a very brief period, bring your neck to the lamp-post and your property to paupers or the flames. Yet this again is the "intellect" of Infidelity! I for my part know no fool so shallow or short-sighted as a rich man professing or encouraging Infidelity; and he himself would be the first to confess as much, if Christianity once stood aside and let him by himself fight the battle of rich *versus*

poor irresponsibility. I consider every one of these infidel publications which you have the infatuation to pile round you in the light of so many incendiary brands, requiring only the hand of an infidel laborer or servant to wrap you and your family in a shroud of fire. A rich man an Infidel! a man proclaiming to characters of every description that there is no Divine commandment against robbery and murder! "It is only a forgery of the reign of Hezekiah!" So Newman affirms; and so you, the rich Infidel, would trumpet in the streets of London and proclaim from the roof of Newgate! It is fortunate for you such "intellect" makes few Englishmen proselytes to its principles.

Inf. Christianity in its appeal to property has certainly the advantage over Infidelity.

Chr. I am at a loss to conceive what shadow of advantage Infidelity can bring to property, or what comparison of any kind can, in this respect, be instituted between it and Christianity. Infidelity at work means the abolition of property and the dissolution of society—but what I desire to impress upon you is, that such abolition and dissolution correctly and legitimately ensue from the premises and principles of Infidelity. To this you seem to be blind: you appear totally unconscious that in arguing on your own principles with the communist, he is palpably and completely your master; wrenching with irresistible force from your hand the sword you have forged and attempt to wield against Christianity, he plunges it with instantaneous and mortal effect into your own bosom. And I again and again demand, on the principles of

Infidelity, why should he not? You are mute, or your sole reply is that which, in other countries, has been repeatedly submerged in torrents of blood or scattered to the winds by the roar of artillery.

Inf. Reserving the expression of my decision on the other topics of our investigation, I will admit Christianity to be the most solid guaranty the world possesses for the preservation of law and order in society. I will even add, that being so, it must be the direct interest, as well as the duty of every man of means and influence to support its claims and extend its principles through every grade of the community—and this admission ought, I think, at present, to satisfy you.

Chr. It ought not to satisfy yourself. Through how many hands has this property of yours since the Conquest passed?

Inf. Perhaps a hundred.

Chr. And it will pass through hundreds of others. How much of it have your ancestors taken with them out of the world? How much will you take?

Inf. Nothing.

Chr. Property really means that which is "your own." Now it is only by a conventional deception of language, than which you know nothing is more wilfully common, that you can call this estate, through which you are only one of so many passers through, your property. Extend the idea a little further, and the passengers in the railroad carriages yonder, which are at this moment shooting through it, may as well call it *their* property, the difference is simply one of time,—between minutes and years,—not

between defeasible and indefeasible possession and usufruct. If you support Christianity by reason of its being the only power that binds the conscience itself to the defence of property, the advantages which accrue to you from it will, like the morality of the soulless character to which we referred, surcease to you with this life. You will be using—wisely, I grant in your generation—the love and grace of God to the souls of men for selfish temporary purposes of your own. That alone is your true property which can never be taken away from you, which cannot be separated from yourself: over which neither death nor time has the power of dissolution or removal; the possession and treasures of which you can dispatch beforehand to precede your own arrival in heaven; I mean the soul with its virtues and works in Christ. To consider any thing except the soul yourself, or any thing of which you cannot transfer a single particle with you into the future state of yourself "your property," is weakly permitting yourself to be imposed upon by the common courtesy of worldly language. The hollowness of the Christianity which is only such for the sake of its property is certain to betray itself, and the very object of its hypocrisy, though in the especial point of secular security it may succeed, will almost as certainly be turned by some process of God, as easy as it is inscrutable, into the reverse of a blessing or source of happiness to the man who thus practises with the religion of self-sacrifice and the Cross. It is within your knowledge how gravely Christianity deals with mere riches and mere rich men. While

most solemnly forbidding a grain of their gold, or a blade of their grass being coveted or touched, it declares that, in the present constitution of our fallen nature, "it is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven." And all experience confirms the truth that there is less of real nobility of spirit, less largeness of mind, less faith towards God, and practical good towards man in the rich, than in those who are "not rich in this world." If the religion of Christ allows the conjunction of the terms, "a rich Christian," it certainly does not allow the possibility of such a conjunction as that of a hoarding Christian.

Inf. What say you, then, of those men who live only to die worth their hundreds of thousands?

Chr. Let them judge themselves. It is not they who are alone to blame. The servile respect for mere wealth, which, to a great extent, debases both the religious and commercial world, is of itself sufficient to make infidels and revolutionists of the poor and industrial classes. The constant witnessing of it in the highest classes of society, is of itself enough to make the acquisition of that which is thus bowed down to and acknowledged as their master by their superiors, the passionate object of the envy and cravings of the lower classes of the community; and if they once become Infidel, they become also and remain "the dangerous classes;" in which case the shortest means of becoming rich will approve themselves as the best also to their principles and judgment. Did Christianity do no more than lift up a voice of unceasing protest against so degrading a standard of worth, its value would, even in this single

respect, be incalculable; but it also effects its own teachings and convictions in the hearts of tens of thousands of the Christian poor. Simple faith in the Gospel destroys at once that spirit of dissatisfaction arising from a false valuation of things which lies at the root of social turbulence and civil conspiracy. If the masses of England were not in the main Christian, the laws and constitution of England would not be worth the paper on which they are written: it is the faith of the people that makes the government, not the government the people.

> "Quid vanæ sine Moribus prosint Leges?
> Dis te minorem quod geris, imperas;
> Hinc omne Principium, huc refer Exitum."

To limit, therefore, your acceptance of Christianity to its protective aspect of your temporalities, would infer a withering kind of wisdom for yourself. It may increase the amount of moral guaranty which insures you a life-interest in your estate; but received in this mercenary spirit, of what avail would it be to yourself, to your soul? If, property being the motive, you embrace Christianity because it is a shield to it, you may as readily throw it away when, by doing so, there is a prospect of dishonestly acquiring the property of another. Christ has nothing salvatory to do with your soul, nor your soul with Christ, in a proceeding which thus tampers with right motives and holy obligations. The benefits of it are as transient as your tenure. If, being convinced of the superiority of Christianity as the firmest, and beyond comparison the cheapest, constitution for a civilized people, with all the intricate combina-

tions of personal and real rights involved in the action of civilization, you are disposed by giving your support to its institutions and ordinances to show yourself a Christian, will it not be much more satisfactory to your conscience, as a matter of good faith and honesty towards God, to be a Christian at once? If you think of doing a Christian work, why not do it on Christian principles, do it as a proof and memorial of the love of God to your soul and of the responsive love of your soul to God? If Christianity be of God, such a work will both precede and follow you to heaven; it is as immortal as the soul, as deathless as the Saviour; of it and the benediction of the Almighty attached to it, no change in body, time, or circumstances can deprive you; it has in its very act and completion become an imperishable part of your eternal existence. Whatever you do, therefore, let it not be factitious; be it little or great, let it, at all events, for the sake of the highest part of yourself, be done on the right motive, the true principle of a Divine and holy faith in God.

INF. I will, then, in trying some Christian work as an experiment of conscience, do so as a Christian and not as a politician.

CHR. Felix esto: you will at least discover that whatever sensations may be connected with other reminiscences of your life, the action of "the gifts of God" in the soul entail no repentance.

We have thus brought our arguments to a conclusion. We first showed what that standard of the

Orthodox Faith is which is professed by Catholic or universal Christendom; we drew attention to the fact that the Unity of Faith, expressed by this rule or standard, includes nearly one half of the present population of the globe; we pointed out the Standard of Faith in the Church of England to be no other than this of universal Christendom—the Scriptures and the Three Creeds. We then proceeded to analyze and dispose of the most prominent objections urged by Infidelity against Christianity as contained in these standards. We dealt first with the exceptions taken to certain special portions of the Scriptures, and secondly, with those against the general doctrines of Christianity as summed up and delivered in the Creeds. In doing so, we examined the nature and tendency of the principal opinions of Infidelity in its modern form and aspect. Lastly, we proved Infidelity, in any form whatever, to be logically and necessarily productive of debasement and destruction alike in the individual, the family, the parish, and the state. If our conference should induce you to calmly reconsider the pretensions of such Infidelity to "intellect," or lead you to view that great System of Spiritual Order comprehended under the name of Christianity as no less the law of God than Nature itself, the time occupied in these discussions will not, with God's blessing, have been spent in vain.

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